

# THE STORY OF FAUST

## APOLOGIA

WHEN mediocrity touches a masterpiece, the circumstance demands an apology.

Wherever one stands upon the ladder of knowledge, there are ever some above, and ever some beneath. We are helped by those above. We are at times privileged (even near the beginning) to help those beneath.

So some men and women—not having the taste or the time—may know less of Goethe than I do; and may, looking over my shoulder, see more of this vision of life and destiny than if they had stood alone.

This is my apology.

M. C.

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

## THEIR

### SYMBOLICAL MEANING AND HISTORICAL PARALLEL

**FAUST:** Human soul—male principle (intellectual). Active, creative; striving after wisdom.

**MEPHISTO:** Principle of negation; author of ignorance, doubt, and barrenness. Animal (sensuous) self, prince of this world (usurper).

**EARTH-SPIRIT:** Real ruler of our world; one of the Nature-spirits, who are workers with the Creator. Symbol of creative wisdom in manifestation; **NATURE.**

**MARGUERITE:**\* Human soul—female principle (emotional). Passive, nourishing; abiding in love. (This appears first as erring desire and emotion, and merges later into divine love.)

**THE MOTHERS:** Creative wisdom behind manifestation. (Third Logos?)

**HELEN:** Symbolising the-artistic side of human life—art, literature, etc. Beauty.

**WAR:** The struggle for self-development against hindering existing circumstances.

**THE COLONY:** The struggle for the life of others, which leads to redemption.

**THE MADONNA:** Divine love.

Spirit of the races born in a Gothic cradle among the ruins of Rome, and now foremost in civilisation.

Spirit of criticism and denial preceding the age of reason. (See Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, chap. vi., vol. ii.)

Science in its best aspect. The study of, and communion with, Nature.

Emotional side of the races. "The first literature after escape from the iron bonds of the theologian was animal, not intellectual" (Draper, vol. ii. p. 128); but the Troubadours had, like Gretchen, their mystic side.

(No parallel on the physical plane.)

Greek works of literature and art translated and transported into the Western world, working the Renaissance.

The revolutions which ushered in modern liberty.

"Free people on a free soil." Modern civilisation. The aim and end of the Middle Ages.

The Millennium. The life to come.

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\* *Sex.*—There is an interesting article on Sex in *The Theosophical Review* for July 1906. It postulates the ambisexual nature of human beings; defines the "cerebro-spinal system" as the male, and the "sympathetic system" as the female; and reminds us that Christ was born of a woman. The God within us (which is Love) is born from Desire. Faust has to stoop from his sterile intellectual pursuits to touch Desire ere he develops Love. *The circle is developed from the crescent, not from the pillar.*

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PART I

# THE STORY OF FAUST

## CHAPTER I

### MIDNIGHT

THE Middle Ages, in all their picturesqueness, and in all their darkness !

A narrow cell, more a vault than a room—dim, and dusty, and damp; the only daylight it can receive being what little filters through the small smoke-grimed panes of a narrow Gothic window, when the scant sunbeams fall upon books, and books, and books (the whole room is lined with them, littered with them, covered with them); and then, as the rays wander upwards, they get lost, and die into twilight in the heavy shadows of the groined roof. Sunlight and air do not remain unchanged when they enter the Gothic dwelling, and the architecture is typical of the times, for the age will have little to say to natural facts and natural laws, but is living hemmed in, closed round, by the writings of bygone sages, by the reputed sayings of dead men.

But if the cell is dim by day, it is darker still by night; for the only light which illumines it then is that which is given out by a quaint oil lamp of the shape of those used in the old days of Pompeii. This is now burning, and the feeble, fitful rays only serve to deepen and darken the shadows in all the nooks and corners of the room; to emphasise the darkness, as it were; to throw an air of

mystery round what, in broad, open daylight would be commonplace, and, with the strange moving shadows which it casts, to endow with seeming life and to magnify into evil monsters the reptiles, skeletons, and stuffed animals with which the cell is adorned.

The room is only partly typical of its occupant, however; but the occupant is *wholly* typical of the age! He is the central interest, well worth studying. A man scarcely over fifty, in what nowadays is hardly more than the prime of life, and yet white-haired, wrinkled (furrowed, more truly), shrunken, worn, and old. He sits with his head sunk upon his chest, his eyes fixed in an unseeing stare on a dark corner of the room; and on the clumsy wooden desk in front of him lies a ponderous volume, open but unread.

Books, one can tell at a glance, have been the study of his lifetime: the room is full of them, as we saw; but the dust lies thickly upon the once well-read volumes, and moths and worms destroy the formerly cherished possessions, and are undisturbed in their ravages.

The occupant of the cell has spent his strength and his youth upon other men's writings; and apparently these have not brought him far upon the path towards the object of his desire, for his present attitude is one of utter apathy, almost of utter hopelessness.

From time to time he moves restlessly in his high-backed chair, and mutters in his long white beard, and then is silent again.

The cold dark hours go slowly by, and it is close upon midnight when he rouses himself at last, and breaks into speech; into words of intense bitterness and scorn.

Once the silence is broken, it seems to be a relief to him to talk to the silent walls and the mouldering volumes. His surroundings arouse in him a passion of anger. He contemplates them with bitter rage. He recalls in terse and vivid language all the studies of a lifetime to which they have been witness. What is there that the age

affords of learning, that he has not worked at and probed to the uttermost? Jurisprudence,<sup>1</sup> medicine, philosophy, and "Alas! also theology," he adds acridly. He has gone through all that his epoch affords in the way of learning, and only to gain as a reward of his labour a conviction of the depth of his own, and of the general ignorance. And if he has gained something in the process by outstripping all the fears and superstitions of his age, he has lost by outdistancing also its pleasures and its consolations, and his mental realm has become a shadowless, sunless world, the monotony of which appals him.

Men take disillusionment and disappointment very differently, according to their several natures; it is a time when their real selves come very near the surface; and for a moment, in such a crisis, we get a glimpse of the *man as he is*.

Dr Faustus has come to such a crisis, such a pause in his life, and is surveying the empty results of past labour.

He takes the failure, superficially, with a kind of grim humour, and counts aloud the number of seasons that he has led a host of students by the nose through tortuous bypaths which lead to nowhere. But the light mood passes quickly, and he sinks back into the depth of numbing sorrow which is controlling him, realising and recalling once again the bitter fact that all his strivings have not brought him to any reality, have procured him no single truth with which he may go forth armed with power, for the teaching and guiding of humanity.

He has reached *Zero*, and through what paths of horror and suffering!

From purest altruism, he passes with sudden reaction to purest egoism. He reviews all the enjoyable things

<sup>1</sup> These names hardly convey to us what they meant in those days. They roughly covered all that was to be learnt in the way of higher knowledge and higher thought. The subjects, too, were taught chiefly in an empirical and speculative form, for the exact sciences were as yet unrealised by the European mind.

## THE STORY OF FAUST

which he has passed by in order to devote himself to the pursuit of apparently unreachable truths. He recalls a life of such physical discomfort as a homeless dog might have led. Remembers his lonely youth, and its refusal of all that is comprised in the little phrase, "*Joie de vivre*." He surveys his still more lonely age, obscure, unhonoured, unloved, and calmly sums up all that has been done for the sake of truth, the hem of whose garments he has not even touched. Finally, he recalls his passing over into the devious ways of magic, with the hope of winning nearer to some reality, and of thus gaining deliverance from his bitter daily task: that of teaching to others what he does not know himself.

*Pity him!* He is going through one of the keenest forms of mental suffering of which we are perhaps capable; through the suspense, through the desolation, the weary, feverish unrest of a transition period, with all its alternating moods of unjustifiable hope and unreasonable despair. The old has ceased to satisfy, and lies mouldering and neglected about him; the new is not born yet, not yet conceived even, though its advent is faintly surmised. But as in Faust's dark moods he is too contemptuous of the capacities of mankind, in his hours of hope he expects too much from that which he dimly feels to be coming. He is watching for the breaking forth of eternal light, when all that is due is the sunrise of another day; is expecting the near advent of a perfection, when all that is about to be born is only the next generation; is stretching out his hands to touch the goal, when all that is to be achieved is — the next step.

And here, before we take up the story of that next step as symbolised in his life, in order to understand the underlying meaning in the tragedy, we must pause for a few lines of explanation. We all know that the drama of Faust is more than the story of a man's life; it is a play with many meanings. We will try and follow the historical side to begin with.

The drama is (among other things) the picture-history of the development of those races which are now foremost in the march of civilisation. Faust is the symbol of this pilgrim of humanity; represents the genius of those races who were cradled among the ruins of the Roman Empire, who are now in their full manhood, and will perish in due course, to give place to a younger and better race when the destined time arrives.

It is necessary to remember this underlying historical meaning throughout the play, and to read the deeper sayings of the actors with reference to it.<sup>1</sup>

In the opening scene, for instance, in Faust's angry invective against "the musty folios, the useless levers, cranks and wheels, the phials, tubes, retorts, bodies of birds, and dead men's bones, with which he is surrounded"—aids which have only hampered him in his search for the realities—*it is the voice of the twelfth century that speaks!* It is the growing instinct of that epoch which begins to cry aloud that this is not what is wanted; that it is time to clear away the lumber—time to go out into the daylight and see things as they are. And the writings of dead men, and the whole realm of authoritative and empirical literature will be left behind, cast aside, when the rejuvenated Faust (typifying the Renaissance) leaves his prison cell, with all its dusty manuscripts, and goes out into the world to feel, see, and think for himself.

One moment more, and then we can go back to the story. We must consider his present point of view, and the tremendous change that that "going out into the sunlight" will imply.

There are two sides from which knowledge may be approached: the inside and the outside. We can travel by soul-sight, piercing from within-outwards (which is at first instinct and later on becomes insight), or by brain-work puzzling from without-inwards. (This process we may call experiment.)

<sup>1</sup> See *Dramatis Personæ*.

Both systems have their advantages and their drawbacks.

The first is Conservative. It is the rule of the few, the best. But when the aristocrats have been too long in power the system begins to work more harm than good. For under it only the few can qualify for rule, and the many depend upon their superiors, till they begin to grow parasitic. It is the form of government suited for the childhood of races or of men.

The second system is Radical. It is the way of the many, for we are all in touch with the outward, and can work in it somehow, even if feebly. This is the form of government most suited for the manhood of nations.<sup>1</sup>

When our story begins, the world is on the eve of a change of party in the Parliament of Thought. The aristocrats have been in power too long. The spirit of Conservatism is crushing out all young life, all growth. Worse still, the "aristos" no longer deserve their name. The rulers are not the best of the people; they are wolves in sheep's clothing, selfish men in the robes of a selfless priesthood; but, were they archangels in the same robes, they would still have to yield up the sceptre—the time has come for the change.

The nations that rose from the ruins of Rome have long since outgrown their childhood; need no longer to be sheltered and governed; need, indeed, to be thrust out from sheltering care into the open to fend for themselves, to experience for themselves, and to earn their own right of life. Their growth is being hampered by the once-wise restrictions; premature old age is coming over them because of their imprisonment.

And the story of Part I of Faust tells of this change from the guidance of authority and instinct to the teaching of experience—*tells the story of the Renaissance in*

<sup>1</sup> In the days of our childhood we are ruled by the few. In manhood we are among the many who work independently. In ripe old age we go back to the Conservatism of childhood; but this time we are among the rulers, sacrificing ourselves, helping to train an infant race.



*allegory*! Faust leaves his cell and its dusty folios, half fearing, half rejoicing, as the pioneers of that great movement must have left the nursery traditions which had bound the world for some hundreds of years when the cry went forth—UHRNATUR GEGEN UN-NATUR,<sup>1</sup> and the creed was preached that sunshine and nature were not evil, and that experiment versus faith was the remedy for everything.

Now we can come back to Faust (the symbol of the twelfth century), where he sits in his Gothic cell, cramped and confined, shut out from the light of day, hemmed in by tradition and superstition, prisoned; but restless, with the instinct of a coming change.

. . . . .

The learned Doctor has been silent for a while after his outburst of anger. His closing words were an impassioned appeal to be shown the inner working of things; but while silent the current of his thoughts has changed. His wishes are tending in another direction. The reaction against long-continued asceticism, of which Mephisto is soon to take advantage, is beginning to set in.

His mood has become dreamy! The light of the full moon streams in through the dusty panes, and a pool of silver spreads and glows in the midst of the shadows in that dark corner into which he has been so long gazing. Faust rouses himself, and, looking up, apostrophises the melancholy white moon seen dimly through the window.

"Would that thou sawest my weariness for the last time, sad friend!" he says.

Then his thoughts pass out from the dusky room on the wings of the moonbeams, and he would fondly imagine himself walking in a silvery world away on the summits of some snowy range. He dreams that he is looking out on

<sup>1</sup> Nature *versus* the un-natural. We have no English prefix that corresponds to "Uhr." It means fundamental, original, eternal.

to an infinity of gleaming peaks and shadowy mountain sides which rise like islands from lakes of fleecy grey clouds—a world of grey, over-arched by a blue-grey sky, sprinkled with steely stars—a world of quiet, restful beauty.

He stands drinking in the peacefulness of the imagined scene—the spell is so strong that the surroundings have all the air of reality—when suddenly to his wayward fancy the soft snow seems to melt beneath his feet, and he sinks gradually downwards through the crust of the everlasting hills into vast dim caverns of some under-world. There he drifts on unseen currents with hosts of other shades through misty depths for long periods of time, till the cavern walls melt away from before him (vanishing silently as the snow had done) and he finds himself out in homely meadows, still a shade, drifting above the sleeping flowers through the moonlight, bathing his being in the falling dew, with all his feverish longings and strivings passed away, himself once more with nature—and at rest.

. . . . .

The vision ends abruptly. Something has broken the spell, recalling him back to the trials of reality, and he starts up with an angry exclamation—

“Alas, still in this brute body!”

Some trivial bodily pain it is perhaps that has thus rudely shattered his moonlight dream. Perchance only the sound of rats scampering across the rotten floor; or, it may be, it is only the moon, the maker of dreams, that has moved onwards, taking her pools of silver and their illusions with her.

But the first is the most usual finale to such visions. The intrusion of some bodily need! Some twinge of rheumatism, or a pang of hunger, cold or heat, thirst or fatigue—anything prosaic and unpleasant. And, alas! we seldom manage to come down from the heights still surrounded by the peace we enjoyed there. Dr Faustus

is no exception to the rule. He rises angrily, looks round his dusty prison, and *curses* it :—

“ . . . This abhorred and musty room,  
Where heaven's dear light itself does pass  
But dimly through the painted glass.  
. . . With books and boxes round me piled,  
And glass, and many a useless instrument,  
With old ancestral lumber blent.  
This is my world. And *what* a world ! ” (A. S.) .

Slowly, very slowly, he is being taught the uselessness of the surroundings among which he has groped hitherto, and this vision seems to be a crisis of his discontent with the must and mould and “deadness” of everything.

Slowly, very slowly, come his next words, almost in the form of an invocation to himself. His tones are no longer those of his normal voice ; he has the appearance of a man half entranced and seems as if he were repeating aloud what some higher power was impressing on him.

INSTINCT indeed it is, that is pointing to the coming change.

“ . . . And dost thou ask wherefore thy heart  
Lies dread and still within thy breast?  
Why the dull ache will not depart  
By which thy life-pulse is oppressed?  
Instead of being in nature's living sphere,  
Created for mankind of old,  
Another life thou ledest here,  
Hemmed in by skeletons and dead men's mould.” (A. S.)

There is an abrupt silence. The power has gone, and Faust remains, dazed at the strangeness of his own words !

Is *that* the way to find those truths for which he has been seeking all his life? Do they dwell *outside*, in the broad, common light of day, to be seen and sought by the vulgar crowd? Do they spurn the seclusion of the student's cell and its mysterious twilight, to live in the sunshine, objects of common gaze? The total change of all previous conceptions and ideas is too great for him to take in all at once.

Truth in the Middle Ages was looked upon as a mystery, a shrouded deity living in an innermost sanctuary of some hidden temple, seen by none, served from a distance by a chosen few, with the ordinary crowd thrust away beyond the outer wall of the outer court. So when the prophetic voice of instinct hints at the approaching democracy of knowledge, when the once veiled and hidden queen will give audience to all such as have the power to win their way to her, small wonder if Faust fails to understand how such things can come to pass and he falls short of faith in the path pointed out to him.

Again the old philosopher is silent for a while, revolving tremendous issues in his mind. He glances round the musty room once more. In any case the present surroundings have failed him in the past, and offer him no better hope for the future. He comes to a swift resolution—he will follow the voice of prophecy and see where it leads to.

“Up and away then,” he says decisively—“away into the outer world.”

He has thought long enough, and thought has done nothing but spin cobwebs round him ; now he will act, and see what springs from action.

Fearing, perhaps, that his resolve will not last, he rises as if to leave then and there, to go straight out into the midnight air, and walk away under the stars, untiringly and swiftly, so that dawn may find him miles from all that now surrounds him. He rises to leave, and then, alas ! his eyes fall upon the massive volume that still lies open on the table in front of him, and the teaching that he has just received is to be marred and neutralised.

Force of habit and old associations prove too strong for him ; the old chains will not be thus lightly sundered. He *cannot* thus swiftly break away with his past. It clings to him now and drags at the skirts of his mind. He must go, perhaps, but he cannot go empty-handed, with none of his accustomed instruments, and with a brain cleared of

all previous conceptions, and thus stand face to face with nature and see her as she is.

He falters—stops. Bends over the great book, and fingers the pages lovingly, and speaks to it as to an old friend. This he must take with him in his new life, to be a guide to him through unknown places—and little by little the power of the prophetic voice grows less. Is it not a little presumptuous thus going out alone to face truth? Had he perhaps not better stay and study the deep mysteries and secrets with which the master's book is filled? It will show him the course of the stars, will fill him with fervour, and with strength sufficient to sustain the terrible ordeal of direct communion with nature. . . . Will sustain him, so that he shall speak to the spirits as a spirit, as one of themselves. Mere unaided reason without such inspiration will never unravel the holy mysteries and show him the springs of life. . . .

Whether for good or evil, he has slipped back to his previous mental position, still in the search for knowledge, but once again along the lines laid down by authority and lit by inspiration, having refused the path of direct experiment.

Because modern science has learnt practically all that she knows along the latter way, it would be arrogant to deny that the other road does not lead to as great (or greater) results, but it is a road wrapt in darkness, full of pitfalls, with many bypaths leading down into the realms of superstition and insanity. Few but the Greatest journey along it and reach the goal, and many there are that perish by the way. For perfect wisdom a knowledge of both paths is necessary, and Faust's next steps are to be taken along the daylight road, so that it is for evil that he has forgotten the voice and turned back once more. He is trying to avoid what is destined. One is tempted into wondering whether much suffering might not have been avoided had he been obedient to a higher instinct at this moment, and had resolutely set himself to break through the bonds of habit.

But Faust has sat down again, and is tremblingly turning over the pages of Nostradamus' great volume on magic, in search of something that another man has said, to stay the cravings of his soul, which will never be satisfied with aught that is not self-gained.

The pity of it !

The old philosopher stops at a page which has the sign of the macrocosm traced upon it—those interlaced triangles signifying the powers of creation, preservation, and destruction; but having, like all magic symbols, secondary—nay, many other and deeper meanings as well.

Gazing at this, his despair seems to forsake him, and he is caught up to those heights, the temporary enjoyment of which more than make up for all we are destined to go through in the way of anguish and uncertainty in this weary world.

His rapturous outburst is the brightest gleam of light in this wild and stormy scene.

" . . . Through every sense  
What sudden ecstasy of joy is flowing !  
I feel new rapture, hallowed and intense,  
Through every vein and nerve with ardour glowing.  
Was it a god who charactered this scroll,  
The tumult in my spirit healing,  
O'er my sad heart with rapture stealing,  
And by a mystic impulse to my soul,  
The powers of nature all around revealing ?  
Am I a god ? . . . "

His fancy passes upwards and onward, following the outlines of the mystic triangles, till he sees, revealed in them, the whole of the action and interaction of the cosmos, till the total working of the universe grows plain before his eyes.

The downward line, the descent into matter that is creation,—manifestation. The level ground of preservation; the ascent to the first God from whom all things

proceeded, mystically called the God of Destruction. The original elements from which have descended our fire, water, and earth, intermingling with this triune emanation. The whole surrounded by that great circle which is the nearest name we may give to the Nameless One.

Faust breaks into a triumphant chant. “. . . And now at length 'tis given me to realise the wise man's words. The spirit-world is waiting to be entered. 'Tis but thy poor dull sense perceives it not ; thy pulseless heart which cannot beat in unison with its emotions. . . . Up ! Awake ! Arise, disciple ! Live ! Lave thyself in the rosy beams of coming day. . . . Ah, what a symbol !” His last words are almost a cry ; but he suddenly ceases speaking, and they are followed by a silence without even an echo. “Yet a symbol only,” he says slowly, after a pause. . . . “Where shall I find *thee*—thee thyself, eternal nature ? Where seek those breasts on which all heaven and all earth are hanging and are satisfied, while I am here ahungered and athirst ?”

. . . . .

Faust turns over the leaves of the book and is silent again. He pauses at last and smoothes the page upon which is drawn the sign of the earth-spirit.

“How differently these lines appeal to me ! Thou spirit of the earth art nigher, more akin.”

The mystic circle shed an influence that breathed of infinity, that savoured of star-light. This magic drawing has the radiance and warmth of our familiar sunshine. As he gazes at the symbol, its power begins to act upon him. His cheek flushes, a new strength and ardour flows into his veins, and, contemplating it, he cries that a new youth has come to him, that power has been poured into him, that in this new-born energy he will do all, dare all, will plunge into the very ocean of Being, will battle with the great waves of life, and conquer all their might ;

will stay unmoved even amid a shipwreck of great worlds.

The diagrams must be of great power, for the man is beside himself, evidently possessed by the influx of that mysterious energy which the symbol radiates ; he raves as one might rave under the influence of some strange drug, till his frenzied flow of words is at length arrested by a strange chill and darkness that has crept into the room.

He perceives it, and is suddenly sobered. "The moon has hid her light," he murmurs half fearfully. The calm philosopher is unstrung, unnerved, on this fateful night. After years of repression the flood-gates of his emotions are open, and strange moods follow one another in quick succession.

"The moon has hid her light. An unseen power dims the lamp. . . ."

Fear battles with expectancy in his mind.

"And clouds of rosy light are forming round me. Ah ! Whence this shuddering fear of somewhat — not yet visible—descending from above—enfolding me with awful power ?"

"Nay, I know it—feel it. THOU art there, prayer-compelled spirit. UNVEIL THYSELF ! . . . What sudden torture rends my being ; what whirlwind sweeping through my soul with threatening power to wrest my very senses from their dwelling-place ? . . . THOU SHALT—yea, should it cost my life—THOU SHALT . . . UNVEIL THYSELF !"

. . . . .

There is a flash that covers everything with a blinding light, and after the flash a *greater* radiance that remains—that glows and gleams in innumerable living colours, which ripple and change, and pulsate through an oval sphere of glory, that now hides and now reveals a central form of light which it enshrines. A vision too dazzling for mortal eyes, a light beside which our brightest sunshine would be



but a shadow. A sight which we can picture not at all in words, and but very feebly in imagination.

There is silence, but for the throbbing rhythm of the pulsating light. There is darkness outside the glory of the sphere—outer darkness.

The vision remains, a terrible reality—waits patiently; but there is no one to acclaim and welcome.

A fresh play among the flashing, living colours that enwrap the central form; a stronger ripple in the outer sheath of light; a slower, heavier vibration, which sinks and slackens as if seeking to ally itself to some more earthly medium—which sinks and slackens until it condenses into speech—

“Who called me?”

It is most unlike a human voice. It reminds one of the whirring of many wings, or the sound of the rushing of great waters. Still, it has been understood, for out of the darkness comes the answer—an almost inarticulate moan—

“Terrible vision!”

Again the ripple in the outer sheath, and the great light grows stronger as the mild, majestic voice continues—

“Thy prayer was winged with superhuman power. It drew me from my sphere to thee—and now——”

And out of the darkness comes the confession in a broken voice—

“Alas! I cannot face thee.”

Faust has hungered, sought, yearned, entreated, *fought* his way towards this consummation; and at length there has been given to him the curse of a granted prayer. There stands the naked, flashing reality—and where is the suppliant?

He has burned to grasp ultimates, and yet, now that one of the lower truths appears to him in all its naked force, the vision, instead of bathing his soul with inspired light, well-nigh scorches and shrivels him, threatens him with destruction.

The atmosphere of symbolism is as necessary between

ourselves and the verities in the beginning, as the layers of air between ourselves and the suns. The light and the truth is thus dispersed (distorted a little, if you like), but at least softened to our bearing.

*Not rashly or suddenly may we tear away that which thus protects!*

Not by long study of theories within closed walls shall we gain strength to meet reality face to face—rather by years of patient labour under an open sky, and work shoulder to shoulder with others of our kind.

It is the danger of rash grasping, *the peril of prematurity*, perchance, that the vision would show him, for the mild, majestic voice continues—

“With mighty longing of stern soul thou calledst me, and yet thou canst not bear to look upon my outer garment—tremblest at my voice. Lo, I am here! What cowering agitation grasps thee, the demigod? Where’s now the soul’s deep cry? Where is the breast which in its depths a world conceived and cherished, which with ecstasy to rank itself with us, the spirits, heaved?”

The borrowed strength, the artificial ecstasy, have vanished in the presence of a reality, as our imagined beliefs dwindle away in the presence of death. The shrunken thing that is left—we hardly recognise it—is our bare, naked self.

Again the voice peals forth: “Where art thou, Faust, whose voice I heard resound, who towards me pressed with energy profound? Art *thou* he? Thou, who by my breath art blighted, who in his spirit’s depth affrighted, trembles, a crushed and writhing worm!”

But the grave bitterness of the words, instead of teaching Faust humility, lash him into frenzy. We see the worst of the man on this fateful night, for the seizure of fear gives place to a passion of vanity. The naked, shrunken self gathers itself together and would return blow for blow. Faust rises and shouts recklessly—

“Shall I still cower before thee, thing of flame?”

Nay. I am he—am Faust, a spirit also, and thine equal!" And he would press forward into the radiance which surrounds the apparition.

But the form recedes before him ; a storm-ripple passes over the outer sheath. Faust halts, checked in his mad design to break through and touch the central light.

The instant the man draws back, the strange lurid glow dies out of the sphere of light, and the radiance is as it was before, a moment later deepening in colour and intensity as the spirit begins a wondrous vibrating chant of his life and destiny : a song of the ebb and flow of his being through the veins of existence, through the brain-cells of the world. An impelling to action, a bringing to rest, a leading to birth, a guiding to death—you can feel the rising and sinking of the waves of life behind the rhythm of his words—

“ And thus at the loom of Time an endless task I ply,  
Weaving the garment of God, that thou see'st Him by.”<sup>1</sup>

Words pregnant with meaning and with teaching ; *wonderful* definition of the physical plane. But Faust, mad with desire and blind with vanity, is in no mood for such parables.

He presses onwards to his destruction. “ Yes, restless spirit, who o'ersweeps the world,” he cries, “ how near I feel to thee ! ” and he comes impetuously forward once more, to bathe in the light and live, as he thinks, rejuvenated by its power. But to touch that light would be to risk the second death, the shattering of the mental frame built up with so much care, when the soul-atom it contained would slip back into the unindividualised ocean of being whence

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the countless busy spirits that are at work upon each of the worlds. Their task, to help on manifesting nature. This is one of the weavers of phenomena. The elements are their threads ; the worlds are the garments which they fashion. The robes or veils by studying which we may gain some idea of the underlying form of Deity. The garment of Deity is “ seamless,” and again is a coat “ of many colours.”

it came ; and, as he approaches, the great vision vanishes from his touch and sight, while a voice thunders out from the invisible—

"Thou art like the spirit thou imaginest—*not me!*"

"Not thee!" cries Faust. "Not even thee! I, framed after God's own image—not like even thee!"

"Volumes," says a modern writer,<sup>1</sup> "volumes could be written about the blasphemies of the pious." There are, indeed, few of us who have any adequate conception of the gulf between ourselves and Deity. We imagine fondly that we have outgrown childish things, and put away all anthropomorphic conceptions of our Creator; but it is not so.

Fewer still among us will even consider how many links of life may stretch across that gulf.

The partial realisation of the infinite distance and the bridge of living creatures by which it is spanned *stuns* Faust. Who knows what terrible shattering of great hopes built upon pride and cemented together by ignorance caused that despairing cry, "Not even like thee!"

Who knows what sudden torturing sight there was granted him of the world's great altar-stairs, up and down which mighty angels are passing through a multitude whom no man may number? Life, life, life! In all variety of forms, step upon step, making a living ladder whose summit reaches heaven and is hidden in light, whose base rests upon earth, where, hidden in shadow, blind humanity is feebly groping for the way.

<sup>1</sup> H. Spencer.

## CHAPTER II

### MIDNIGHT AND DAWN

A KNOCK at the door—a weak, hesitating knock, which is repeated as it gets no answer.

Faust has remained huddled up in the depths of the great chair, dumb, and seemingly unconscious since he staggered back into it as the vision vanished.

The timid knock is repeated, and at length the sound finds its way into Faust's absent mind, for he rouses himself with an angry exclamation, and mutters something about the intrusion of an earthworm into his heaven.

The "earthworm" apparently does not hear well, and takes the words as an invitation to come in. Accordingly, the door opens and reveals a young man with a silly, vacuous face, dressed in a sleeping robe, with a night-cap at the back of his head, and carrying a small lamp which he carefully shades with his hand, an action that is rather typical of him, as there is no draught where he stands, and he thus shuts out the light from aught that may be in front, leaving the rays to illuminate nothing but his own foolish face.

It is Wagner, Faust's most devoted scholar, the one who lives with him, and does the housework for him, according to the fashion of the times. He adores his master, humours his weaknesses, is familiar with his small domestic foibles (from which no man living is free), reasons with him, contradicts him, and is as far from knowing the real man whom he serves, as the life-companions of a genius usually are.

The change from the sublime to the ridiculous is abrupt, and painfully life-like.

Faust sits silent in the shadow, and Wagner ultimately manages to hold the lamp so that its rays illumine his master, and then seems a little astonished at the strange expression on the well-known face. There is something that arrests even this foolish youth's attention, and he vaguely feels that he may have come when scarcely wanted.

He begins with a halting apology—

"Your pardon—I heard your voice, and thought perhaps you read aloud one of the ancient tragedies. Improvement in this art is now my aim."

He has a mincing accent which makes his ambition a laughable impossibility, but Faust does not interrupt.

"Rhetoric is nowadays of much avail," continues the intruder. "Indeed, an actor, oft I've heard it said, may give *most* valuable instruction to a preacher."

"Ay, if your preacher should chance to be an actor too, as not improbably may come to pass," says Faust sharply.

Wagner has ideas of entering the priesthood, and dislikes the tone of the answer. He sets down the lamp and argues the point with his master.

Faust listens wearily; he has slipped back by this time into the familiar rôle—that of the great Doctor whose daily task it is to listen patiently to much rubbish, and try to instil a little truth into the already folly-filled brains of those about him. He drops in a word now and then when the other pauses for breath, and finally tells his scholar that an ounce of real feeling is more use in swaying an audience than years of practice in gesticulation.

Wagner, as usual, sticks to his own views, but graciously admits that art has a great drawback as compared to nature and natural methods—namely, the time it takes to acquire.

"Art is long, and time is fleeting," he says, relapsing

into truism and proverb, as small minds generally do when they begin to argue.

"And then," continues poor Wagner—"then, as I ply the critic's task, I often feel a very strange oppression both of head and heart. The means, how hardly are they won!—and haply ere one-half the course is run, checked in his progress, the poor devil dies."

He stands blinking at the small lamp, with a very wistful expression on his foolish face.

Faust is touched, and answers him gently; but is almost immediately interrupted by a self-sufficient "Your pardon, but——" and another argument, which continues till the great Doctor's habitual courtesy is strained to the very edge of its endurance. But Wagner drones on, till Faust puts an end to the conference—

"The night, my friend, is now far spent. For this time we must say adieu."

The disciple is trained to obedience, and takes up his small lamp and makes for the door. But he goes regretfully, arguing as he crosses the room, and promising as he disappears to finish the subject on the morrow.

His draperies trail after him, and his voice is still to be heard as he goes down the dark corridor. "Much I know now, but fain would learn of everything." He is thinking aloud.

Faust sits rigid and tense as long as the sound continues, and sinks back exhausted into the depths of his chair when there is silence again. His first words are a scathing comment on the "earthworm" who shattered the heavenly vision.

"And yet," he adds in a juster, gentler mood, "I e'en to thee feel gratitude, thou poorest of the sons of earth! Despair my power of sense did well-nigh blast, and thou didst save me ere I sank dismayed."

Oh yes, earthworms have their uses, and have saved many a soul from insanity before now! Faust muses on their lives, and envies them their placid existence. It is

they alone who never lose hope—they alone whose zealous searching in the dust is ever rewarded by wonderful discoveries of sticks and straws, treasures which fill them with wonder and content, and spur them on to fresh efforts. Verily these are the wise and happy ones of earth !

Darker and darker grows Faust's mood as the scene hastens to its dread climax. His thoughts go swiftly back to the vision that dismayed and overwhelmed him, and he lashes his previous insane ambition with the bitterest words—

"I, image of the Godhead, who began, deeming eternal truth secure in nearness, to sun myself in heavenly light and clearness, and laid aside the earthly man—I, more than cherub whose unfettered soul aspired to flow through nature's veins and live creating like the gods—I cowered before the thunder of a voice !"

The teacher has vanished, having apparently effected nothing, but his last words are still echoing in Faust's mind, and are acting as a powerful solvent on the pride and ignorance which held together his brain structures. They are destroying the buildings of many years, and almost threatening the foundations of all that is there.

The lesson is sinking into the very centre of consciousness, for Faust's next words are a bitter confession of his limitations and a surrender of nearly all those ambitions which blind conceit led him to strive for.

"Spirit, I *dare* not lift me to thy sphere. What though my power compelled thee to appear, my art was powerless to detain thee here. In that great moment rapture-fraught, I felt myself so small, so great. Fiercely didst thrust me from the realms of thought, back on humanity's uncertain fate. Alas ! who'll teach me now ?"

Faust may well despair, for it is a crucial experiment which has received a check, and it evidences clearly that there is no further progress to be made along the same direction.

It is *magic*, which has failed him in his need.



It is the second great failure of Faust's life.

His memory goes back to the time when he at length perceived that books were useless beyond a certain point—the day when he said bitterly that a manuscript was but the history of another mind's unavailing efforts to find truth; the pages but so much painful evidence that self-torture was the lot of educated man.

That was the first failure—this is the second.

(But the last failure leaves him nearer to the truth than the first. The first effort was an attempt to find truth at secondhand ; the last attempt was at least self-directed.)

Magic applied by his intensely fervid desire and keen will has succeeded in bringing what he longs for, just out of touch but into sight for one moment ; and that one moment has amply proved that he will never attain by these means.

So once more he is completely baffled : beaten back and stripped bare of all his mental possessions ; reduced, as we said, to the naked, shrunken self ; left with nothing but the indestructible nucleus of his life, and set the task of building another sheath around it.

But that nucleus (besides fear and vanity) contains a living power which is strong enough for the work. *This is the ineradicable yearning after truth !*

This is the ruling passion of Faust's life ! This is the immortal idea *ever* at the centre of his consciousness, and round this eternal thought will be built, after many failures, a body as indestructible as itself.

*If we are to understand the man, we must keep this ruling feature of his character ever in our memory—it is the key to all his actions, the clue to the whole story.*

In the depth of his present humiliation, the central idea comes into sharp prominence, for his confession of defeat reaches its saddest note with the afterword, "Alas, who'll teach me now !"

He is indeed in despair of finding a teacher, for he has no faith in any teaching that might come to him in con-

nection with the common lot of humanity, back amidst which he has been thrust.

Poor humanity! He would like to help it, to be beneficent, but he has *such* a contempt for it! He muses over the littleness of the race now, realising with renewed bitterness the imperfections and failings of blind mortals; and the defect which seems to him the greatest, the one that contributes most to keep them in their lowly state, is the absence of enduring aspiration.

Life, he admits—life, as well with its pleasures as its cares, tames the ardent spirit, dulls its craving after truth, tones it down to a level of apathy, till the long, long thoughts of youth, which required worlds to house them, are contentedly herded in a little room.

Like the gods! Nay, in his bitterness, he says humanity (and he includes himself)—humanity is nearer of kin to the worms which crawl aimlessly about in the dust of the highway till they are crushed by the foot of a passer-by.

Dust—dust—dust! Ashes and dust! His fiery enthusiasm has burnt itself out, and nothing remains but the ashes of his humiliation, and the dust which surrounds him.

“Is not this all dust,” he says, “this rubbish in a thousand shelves, these very walls which now surround me; these useless instruments, these wheels, cogs, rings, and cylinders, by which my father sought to wrest from nature secrets she doth still refuse?”

Ashes and dust! His eyes pass from one familiar object to another; from the books to the phials and retorts which crowd the upper shelves; from these to the specimens and skeletons, the astrological implements; and then back to the books and scrolls again. And each inanimate thing seems to be repeating the same words, and reminding him of the failure of his life and of those lives which have preceded his, till Faust takes up a grinning skull from the table near, and sees in it the only end to a search after truth.

"What we have we enjoy. Better to have squandered my heritage on youthful pleasures, upon life and love, upon wine and feasting ; to have taken the golden hours as they came ; to have enjoyed, and thus possessed them."

The dreary discomfort of his present surroundings is a sorry contrast to the home he might have had. Buoyed up by hope from day to day, and living in a world of thought, he has given until now scant attention to the place in which his body lived ; but to-night he looks round upon the possessions for which he has paid with his fortune and his youth, and asks himself what they are ; and the answer is written in front of him—So much worthless dust.

How long Faust sits after this, sunk in a kind of stupor gazing in front of him, he is not aware. The night slips by unheeded ; the cathedral bells above ring out the hours ; and the dawn comes up over the hills, and outside there is all the freshness and loveliness of early spring morning when he rouses himself at last with a shudder in the cold, lamp-lit cell.

It requires a strong effort to change his position and take his eyes from the spot on which they have been fixed for so long, for he has been unconsciously staring at a glint of light on a bottle on one of the shelves, until he is half hypnotised.

"Yon phial is like a magnet for my eyes," Faust says, as he rises to shake off the feeling of numbness and stupor which hangs about him. *Then comes a sudden recognition of what it is that has riveted his attention for so long.*

The discovery is like a gleam of moonlight shining on a traveller lost in the dark depths of some immense forest. It shows an untried path close to him, a possibility of escape before unnoticed.

The idea is worth consideration ; after all, he need not go to the extreme limit, only just far enough to dull this ceaseless, unsatisfied craving, to give a little ease from the torture under which he has been for so long.

Worn out with anguish, the temptations of such an anodyne are irresistible, and after a moment the great Doctor has crossed the room, and has the phial in his hands.

A little, such a little of it would dull the pain, would make all the realities of life grow dim, and all its petty details turn to mighty things—"For thus the poppy works."

A little, a very little, would do this—and a little more—and then—ashes to ashes and dust to dust—and an end of all pain.

Or, who knows? Perhaps death is the teacher for whom he has ever been vainly seeking.

He has taken down a silver goblet and poured the poison out, and the subtle scent steals into his brain and conjures up strange, distorted visions. He must needs steady himself against the high-backed chair, for the world is swaying round him, and out of darkness and space a chariot of fire comes floating down to bear him away to other spheres of pure activity and bliss, when suddenly—between him and it—hell-mouth appears, a flaming abyss which he needs must cross to reach the goal. And nearer than the open mouth of hell, which even his fevered brain dimly suspects to be but a hallucination, is a tract of darkness, spreading far and wide around him, encroaching upon the narrowing circle of light; and this is the shadow of a reality, for its name is—"possible annihilation."

The courage of despair comes to his aid. "Now is the time," he cries, "through deeds to show that mortals the calm sublimity of gods can feel; to shudder not at yonder dark abyss, where fantasy creates her own self-torturing brood, right onwards to the yawning gulf to press, around whose narrow jaws rolleth hell's fiery flood; with glad resolve to take the fatal leap. Though danger threaten thee, to sink in endless sleep"—and the goblet is raised to his lips.

CLING-CLANG, CLING-CLANG. It is the Easter chimes

ringing at dawn, and their strength and sound seems increased a thousandfold, for the vibration shakes the cell to its foundations, and the very earth seems answering to the call, and throbbing in unison with the swinging rhythm.

Faust's hand is arrested, and he listens to the merry peal that follows, the bells tripping one another up, in their haste and eagerness to tell out the glad tidings—

“Kyrie eleison,  
Christi eleison,  
Christ is arisen.

Mortal, all hail to Thee,  
Thou whom mortality,  
Earth's sad reality,  
Held as in prison.”

It is the great Easter hymn, sung at dawn by thousands in the cathedral near.

“Ay,” says the old philosopher, “ring out, glad chimes, believing crowds among. The message well I hear; my faith alone is weak. From faith, her darling, miracle, hath sprung. Aloft to yonder spheres I dare not soar, whence come these tidings of great joy.”

The Roman Church, the nurse in whose sheltering arms mediæval civilisation has grown up, is now beyond her work, and for a long time has been little more than a hindrance to the creature she has reared, while the fairy stories and fables with which she amused and instructed the infant mind have later been so many stumbling-blocks on the way to truth. For the old nurse requires that all the self-contradictory, sense-contradictory play-books shall be taken in earnest, and would hinder the child from learning aught that is beyond the scope of the semi-developed mind.

The good nurse has done her work, and has done it well. But she will not see that the time has come for her to relinquish the hold she once possessed; will not be *made* to see that the child has grown into a man and has

all a man's right of liberty and self-government. She only grows more tyrannical and querulous as time goes on, and will linger for many years yet, still snatching eagerly at the remnants of power that are left to her, and, with the idea of doing what is wisest, will try to the end to hamper and control the actions of a mature humanity.

And still the bells ring on, and, in spite of all this, there is a strong power in their appeal. Their deep tones have carried Faust's thought back to the days of his childhood, and to the scenes of his untroubled youth, when "fraught with solemn meaning and mysterious power chimed the deep-sounding bell—and prayer was bliss."

The crisis has passed. Unconsciously the man's fingers have slackened their hold on the poison-cup, and as he crosses the cell to throw open the casement that the voices may come to him more clearly, his sleeve overturns the goblet and its contents flow over the table and on to the dusty floor, where their power evaporates harmlessly, without his having even noticed what has occurred.

And still the bells ring on, while at intervals the chorus takes up the refrain—

"Christi eleison,  
Christ is arisen.

He whom we mourned as dead,  
Living and glorious,  
From this dark grave hath fled,  
O'er death victorious."

And the scene closes thus, with the pealing of the bells and the music of the voices, while Faust kneels at the open window watching the dawn, listening to the chimes, his mind busied with childhood's memories—and at rest.

## CHAPTER III

### EASTER

"LOOSED from their fetters are streams and rills ;  
Through the gracious spring-tide's all-quickenning glow  
Hope's budding joy in the vale doth blow.  
Old Winter back to the savage hills  
Withdraweth his force, decrepid now,  
Thence only impotent icy grains  
Scatters he as he wings his flight,  
Striping with sleet the verdant plains ;  
But the sun endureth no touch of white ;  
Everywhere growth and movement are rife,  
All things investing with hues of life.

. . . . .  
Turn thee around, and from this height  
Back to the town direct thy sight.  
Forth from the hollow gloomy gate  
Stream forth the masses in bright array ;  
Gladly they seek the sun to-day.  
The Lord's resurrection they celebrate.  
For they themselves have risen with joy  
From tenement sordid, from cheerless room,  
From bonds of toil, from care and annoy,  
From gable and roof's o'erhanging gloom,  
From crowded alley and narrow street,  
And from the church's o'erbreathing night  
All have now come forth into the light."

It is an exquisite description of an Easter Day—an Easter early in the year, falling on one of those first caressing days of spring, when all is as yet but a promise and a prophecy. When, except for some wild-flowers and the hedges, the tender green of the mountain ash and the

yellow-brown leaf-buds of the horse-chestnut are all that has been given ; and yet these are so *divinely* eloquent of the beauty to come, that the land of promise seems to be more lovely than ever the land of fulfilment *could* be.

We are on a grassy slope just outside the town, looking down upon the grim walls which pen in a closely-packed, jumbled mass of quaint old-world houses, with little narrow, crooked streets just separating them. These, however, are not visible from where we are standing. Indeed, from this point of view there is nothing to be seen above the grey town-walls but such a bewildering mass of roofs and turrets, gables and spires, that one is tempted to believe that there can be no possible room for *any* sort of passage between the dwellings, and that the inhabitants must come home, like the doves, on outstretched wings through the evening twilight, and then sail in through those quaint little windows in the clustering roofs.

There must be some way *in* for wingless humanity, however, for a chattering, laughing crowd of the inhabitants is beginning to pour *out* of the gloomy Gothic town-gate which faces the hills where we are standing; and soon all the country roads are dotted with groups of light-hearted merry-makers, jesting and singing, jostling each other, contradicting each other, full of good humour and the pleasure of the moment, rejoicing in the warmth and the sunshine and the spring, and determined on taking the holiday given them and enjoying it to the uttermost.

The first to get away from their tasks and come out into the country are some workmen, who make the gloomy archway resound with their noisy footsteps, and who, having crossed the drawbridge, stand for a minute or two disputing before they pass on. A few minutes later a couple of serving girls come across arm-in-arm, discussing the inevitable "him." Close upon their heels a bunch of unruly students, casting approving glances at the shapely ankles and short skirts in front of them. One of their number is on the point of carrying his approval into words



and action, but a companion holds him back to look at two demure burgher's daughters who are behind.

"Not for me," says the incorrigible. "The hand that twirls the mop on Saturday fondles you best on Sunday. Prunes and prisms are not my idea of a holiday."

They all laugh and pass up the hill, leaving the demure burgher maidens to remark to each other that the young man of the day is growing very vulgar.

After the next group comes the crippled beggar, whose usual place is on the steps of the cathedral. Considering his crutches and his infirmities, he covers the ground at a very respectable pace, and then settles himself by the wayside in a comfortable and commanding position before beginning his daily querulous chant.

And now the crowd thickens, and all sorts and conditions of men come hurrying out of the dark, crowded little town, eager to get into the fields and the sunshine.

More students, more girls. A fortune-teller, whom the latter consult by stealth by night, and try to ignore in the daylight.

Then, after a stream of young people have gone by, there is a pause ; till, as the afternoon wears on, the elders begin to come out to take the air. Three portly old burghers pace solemnly through the gateway and over the bridge, and go slowly up the path which leads to the hills. They are discussing politics and business, weighing the pros and cons for the present mayor, and they end with the good old eternal grumble about the taxes.

Other wiseacres follow, some discussing the war with Turkey, then going on ; and one grey-headed authority sums up the opinions of his class by remarking that it does not much matter what they do out there, provided there is peace and comfort at home. Just at their heels comes a group of soldiers trolling out a drinking-song, who have probably other views on the military question.

And so the crowd passes before us, each unit absorbed

in its own interests, but all having something in common to-day in the general pleasure of sunshine and spring.

Faust and Wagner have passed out with the rest, but the former, soon tired, has seated himself on a bench a little hidden from the road, and is amusing himself with watching the good folk go by and (large-hearted man that he is) entering thoroughly into their simple pleasures.

His is the soliloquy which heads this chapter, and which will bear re-reading. In the middle of it he breaks off and tries to interest his companion in the life that is going on around them. "Turn thee around, and from this height back to the town direct thy sight. Forth from the hollow gloomy gate stream forth the masses in bright array. Gladly they seek the sun to-day. The Lord's resurrection they celebrate; for *they themselves* are risen with joy, from tenement sordid, from cheerless room."

But Wagner is not to be induced; he feels out of his element, superior to his surroundings, and has no wish either to watch with a kindly smile, or to in any way descend to the level of the singing, dancing crowd about them.

He replies acridly: "Most reverend master, in a walk with you there's honour—and instruction too." (Wagner is prepared to admit that much.) "But here with these I care not to resort, because I coarseness hate of every sort. This fiddling, shouting, skittling, I detest. I hate the tumult of the vulgar throng. They roar as by the Evil One possessed, and call it pleasure—call it song!"

It is the time-worn cant of the pedant, who talks of the "vulgar herd" and the "select few," because his heart is too narrow and too poor to take in the infinite variety of this great round world of ours.

Faust smiles, rather sadly, however, perhaps recognising a caricature of some of his own beliefs. He, too, does not wish to mix with the crowd, but he wishes them well—from a distance. He is saved the necessity of explaining the difference and supporting his position, for a sudden

burst of music drowns every other sound. Some peasants have established a dancing-place under the budding trees close at hand, and a coarse, lively song with a good rousing chorus is being shouted by twenty or thirty healthy rustic throats, to accompany and encourage the dancers.

“Juchè, Juchè,  
Jucheisa, Heisa Hè !”

It is no good trying to make oneself heard, for a while, certainly not for as long as the song continues, for their melody does not much belie poor Wagner's description.

“Then they grew red and then grew warm,  
And rested panting, arm-in-arm,  
Jucheisa, Heisa, Heisa Hè !”

Four verses of it, and the dancers keep up nobly ; but at the end there is, if not exactly silence, at least a lull, which must be very grateful to our friend's wounded sensibilities. He is soon to be further mollified, as one of the elder peasants who has recognised Faust comes up hat in hand and gives a deferential greeting. Other peasants then throng round, and Faust receives a kind of little impromptu ovation, all present praising him to his face in good country fashion and talking loudly to each other of his good work amongst them in the dreaded time of the plague, when, as a young man, Faust worked night and day with his father, healing the sick, comforting the dying, burying the dead.

The old Doctor answers with due courtesy, accepts a glass of country wine from their hands, gives them back their good wishes, and gracefully makes his escape.

The two then pass up the hill—Faust in front, Wagner following—inspired by very different emotions. The disciple babbles happily about the proper respect shown by the multitude to so great a man as his master ; while the great man himself goes wearily up the steep path, conscious of a sudden loss of all pleasure in the people's

holiday, and overcome by a great mental as well as physical fatigue.

When out of sight of the crowd, Faust stops and seats himself on a smooth boulder by the wayside, his thoughts going back to the days of his youth, to the times just now so vividly recalled to him. Then he climbed this hill to fast and pray, believing that thus the plague might be stayed. Then he descended again to administer, in perfect good faith, noxious alchemical preparations made in their own laboratory—drugs which, he since has recognised, probably killed more than the plague itself. Now, crowning bitterness, he—the murderer—lives to be praised!

Wagner breaks in with an attempt at consolation. Faust has been thinking aloud, and the disciple proceeds to chide his master for indulging in morbid thoughts, and then goes on to expound the whole duty of man, which, according to him, Faust has more than lived up to.

Faust does not dispute such a matter with so learned a follower. He lets fall one gentle gibe at the blessedness of those people who have attained the firm ground of absolute knowledge, and then passes on to admire the loveliness of the sunset, and the new beauty of the country lying at their feet when bathed in this mellow light.

The weary man seems to waver between a great need and desire for human sympathy—that is new to him—and the old habitual distaste of sharing his sorrows or his pleasures with the world about him.

To erase the previous impression, he now proceeds to mystify and bewilder his prosaic companion with fantastic descriptions of visions and day-dreams; with yearnings after great wings which would carry him on through the skies in the path of the now sinking sun; with graphic pictures of that path, the sensations to be experienced on it, the scenes to be descried from it—till the disciple remarks drily that though no stranger to day-visions and mind-pictures, *such* out-of-the-way ideas as these never would enter his brain.

Wagner does not approve of the faculty of imagination. We should hardly have expected him to treat that hand-maid of genius with much favour ; he would disbelieve in her prophecies, and call her clairvoyance hallucination.

The pleasures of the mind, he informs his master, are what *he* strives after ; and the pleasures of the mind as described by him, at some length, turn out to be the perusal of books.

It is the subject of the previous night brought up again—parchment versus inspiration !

Faust smiles down at him and says : “ Thy heart by one sole impulse is possessed. Unconscious of the other still remain ! ”

It is meant as a kindly wish. He would not by any means bring the poor earthworm within touch of the fire that is consuming his own heart, but his own sorrow is growing well-nigh unbearable, clamours for expression, insists upon utterance ; and presently Faust comes abruptly out of the realm of kindly, contemptuous persiflage on to the bare plains of truth, being in such *intense* pain that he is careless for the time being who sees, or who knows.

“ Two souls, alas ! are lodged within my breast,” he moans, “ which struggle there for undivided reign. One to the world, with obstinate desire and closely-cleaving organs, still adheres. Above the mist the other doth aspire, with sacred vehemence, to purer spheres.”

“ Two souls.” Wagner’s mouth is agape with contradiction, and Faust hurries back into the light, bantering tone he has momentarily dropped, and commences with mock solemnity an invocation to the spirits of the air. Humour always seems to come to his aid when he is at his saddest. He now entreats these spirits to bring him a magic robe, which shall waft him away on its airy folds far from the work-a-day world.

He may be half in earnest. He is certainly doing a dangerous thing in calling those lower invisible beings who are ever too ready to come, and Wagner, who has the

common sense that so often accompanies mediocrity, breaks in with a horrified entreaty not to meddle with so mischievous a portion of the supernatural creation.

Spirits of the air ! They are best left alone ! Wagner heaps advice upon advice, and begins a long lecture on their various forms, and various powers for evil ; and while his voice drones on, the thoughts of his senior go back to higher things, to the "Two souls which struggle still for undivided reign."

. . . . .

Now some people hold, and have held in past centuries, strange doctrines about thought ; and it will help us in our realisation of the drama to assume for a time that their ideas or theories are fairly correct, as such theorists would consider that which now follows in this scene as not necessarily fable or fiction.

Such theorists teach that thought, besides existing subjectively in the brain of the thinker, exists also objectively in the realm to which it belongs—namely, the mental plane. Further, that thoughts are as perceptible to the beings on that plane, as the trees, animals, and people are to the ordinary human entity down here.

To come to the case in point as an illustration. Faust's thoughts, as he sits dreaming on the hillside in the twilight, exist not merely for himself as hidden things within his own mind, but have also a life of their own as actual moving entities endowed with form and colour according to fixed rules of expression. His confused, dreamy thoughts will take the shape of cloudlets, coloured according to the species of emotion they enshrine. More defined conceptions will issue in geometrical forms. Intense and concentrated ideas will clothe themselves in *human or animal shapes* !

These thought-forms are said as a rule not to be long-lived, and, unless fed by constant repetition, soon dissolve into the atmosphere which surrounds them. If constantly

recurred to, however, and strengthened by persistent brooding, a thought-form is supposed to become quasi-permanent, and to be endowed with such power as to take rank as a resident in our mental world. It will gain in force according to the length of its stay, and may become so densified, as it were, that under certain peculiar and unusual circumstances it might materialise sufficiently to become visible to ordinary people possessing only the ordinary physical faculties.

The foregoing has reference to the part of the drama which we have now reached where Mephisto is about to make his appearance. He is the second person of importance in the play, and it is essential that we should gain a definite idea of the meaning of his coming, and the concept of which he is a representative.

In the historical allegory underlying the drama, we are pretty sure of accuracy in asserting that he stands as the symbol of that spirit of agnosticism and inquiry which was beginning to make itself felt at the end of the twelfth century, and which was almost universally regarded as diabolic.

With regard to Mephisto's value in the drama, when the play is considered only as a story of a man's life, there are two suppositions open to us.

Did Goethe still use the Prince of Evil as a fable or a symbol, or (for remember the poet was no stranger to magic) *as a dread reality*? May Mephisto be considered as a *tangible* creature, as the final outcome of the incessant tormenting doubts in Faust's mind, as the materialisation of his distrust, clothed now in the form of a student and a learner, now in the shape of a scoffer and a devil? The idea is not improbable.

. . . . .

To come back to the hillside. Faust is still gazing away into the twilight; Wagner is still droning on, supremely happy in having been so long without inter-

ruption, and supremely unconscious of having been so long without a hearer; for though Faust's body may be close to him, the inhabiting mind is realms away.

So Wagner continues his instructive discourse, his voice rising and falling according to the most approved rules of elocution; and the other sits gazing into the gathering evening mists—wondering, doubting, fearing, the paralysis of cynicism and mistrust creeping over all that is best and most active in him, just as the grey river-mists are creeping over the valley beneath his outward eyes.

The black mood, which had temporarily lifted, has settled down on Faust again. The holiday in the outer world has not been the rest that he hoped it might be, for the inner world—at a touch, a hint—has again asserted itself with power and has *compelled* his attention; and the outward show of things has again become no more to him than the pictures in a room in which we may sit sorrowing.

Time passes without either of them being aware of the lateness of the hour, until the silence, the very absence of interruption, attracts Wagner's attention; and he stops suddenly with a dim sense of something eerie, and shivers. His master is looking into the creeping mist with a strange intentness, and there is a chill and an unusual muffled stillness that affects even this unimpressionable creature. He touches his master on the shoulder gently and tries to rouse him.

"Let us go home. The air grows chill—the mists descend."

There is a softer tone in Wagner's voice than one would have thought possible. The shrivelled young pedant has one human spot left, which is a sort of old-maidish protecting affection for his master. He would keep this wayward genius out of harm, both spiritual and physical, if possible. And now the air grows chill, and Faust is thinly clad, and old!

But the great Doctor does not move—does not even seem to have heard his disciple's well-meant admonition. He



still sits peering away into the twilight, until the other makes another and a stronger effort to rouse him from this lethargy, and questions as to what it is that is fixing his master's attention, and even glances askance and half-fearfully in the same direction.

This time Faust rouses himself as from a dream, and in answer points over in the direction of some neighbouring fields. "Yon black hound, scampering through corn and stubble?"

"Yes! yes!" replies Wagner, "I've marked him there for long enough."

The Doctor gives ever such a faint sigh of relief. It seems almost as if he had not expected his vision to be visible to others, and is reassured by its being so. Yet for a minute or two he still questions his companion as to the object of their gaze.

Wagner replies placidly. "Yes, it is a dog—an ordinary black dog. There is nothing strange about it. It seems to have lost its master, and to be running about trying to pick up his traces again."

Still Faust urges that the dog does not behave like other dogs; says that its footsteps leave tracks of fire; that in running to and fro the animal seems to be making some diagram—some magic coil, or snare.

The student smiles in a superior way (his is a type exempt from morbid fancies), and finally, to reassure his master, whistles up the dog, which comes up fawning and growling and wagging its tail; and after Faust has watched the animal for a minute or two, he agrees to the common-sense view, though somewhat reluctantly, and then the two men turn and go down to the hill-path towards the town.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ADVENT OF MEPHISTO

*Scene 3.*—The scene shifts again to the philosopher's cell. It is unchanged ; such as it has been for years ; such as we beheld it the previous night. After a few minutes Faust comes in from his walk on the hills, physically weary, and therefore, for the time being, mentally quiescent.

He sinks into the large chair in front of the book-strewn desk, and leans back with a pleasant sense of the peacefulness and rest of his surroundings. It is nice to get out of the chill dusk into the lamp-lit room. There is a sober air of calm indoors, and the narrow cell has all the charm of home to him.

Night, too, is the time that Faust loves best—the time when nature is wrapped in shadows and sunk in slumber, and when the silence lays a subduing hand upon man's feverish desires, allowing the calmer and better thoughts fuller sway.

His is a character the best of which comes out in solitude ! Daylight and the busy life of the world distract and disturb him ; lamplight and a hermitage have till now been his familiar element. His intellect is clearer, his hopes stronger, and his love and comprehension of God greater, when he is hemmed in by familiar barriers, and not wearied out and dazzled by the complexity and brilliancy of the life that seethes outside. (Those who are of his type will sympathise.)

As Faust muses now amid familiar surroundings, in a kind of dreamy content, the dog whom they met in the fields, and who has unnoticed followed them home, interrupts his meditations with uneasy growls from time to time, and the tired man at length good-naturedly gets up to give the animal a mat to lie on ; puts him near the stove, pats him on the head, tells him to be quiet, and stays a minute or two speaking in a friendly tone to this chance-comer.

Then the old philosopher goes back to the big chair to resume his pleasant dreams ; only to find that the brief mood of tranquillity has already passed, and has given place to an unaccountable restlessness.

Like all artists, Faust has that fatal reactionary temperament, and is subject to sudden and severe fluctuations of mood or mind-states over which he has very little control. But beside and beyond that, "the peace that passeth understanding" is a spirit that comes and goes according to laws of its own, and not in answer to our beseeching.

Faust is not ignorant of its periodicity, and merely sighs as he becomes aware that the blessing has passed away, yet admitting to himself that perhaps the very rarity of its visits makes one the more eager to reach the place where it abides. He tries to wing his thoughts now to those distant heights, and sighs again as his imagination is too feeble to picture even from a distance what may be hidden there.

"We sigh for revelation," he says aloud. . . . At least others have seen and described.

He rouses himself, and, crossing the room, brings back with him from one of the shelves a large volume, the New Testament in the original.

"We sigh for revelation," he repeats, turning over the leaves ; "and here it is, at its clearest and its brightest."

It is a strange confession at first sight for a man who

has the pitying contempt which he has displayed for the Church which is founded on the book of which he is speaking. At the bottom, however, there is nothing illogical in his statement, and the explanation lies in the fact that the Church of that day has little but tradition to connect it with its founder. There is no living link between the ignorant, wealthy, unscrupulous, crime-stained, state-established creed which blighted Europe for so many centuries, and was at this particular epoch at its very worst, and the divine young Teacher whose life was spent among the unknown poor and sick, and whose doctrines are all comprised in the words liberty and love.

Faust turns over the pages slowly and stops at the Gospel according to St John, *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος*, and an idea which has more than once crossed his mind comes to him again—why not translate into the mother-tongue the story of that wonderful life? It would be a fascinating task, and a good work, to give this record to the people in a language they can understand. For his age it is a daring thought—a dangerous and a wicked thought, the Church would have said.

Faust steadies the big volume against another book on the desk and draws an unused roll of parchment towards him. Why not begin now? It is something tangible, something definitely useful, . . . *and the Devil, watching through the dog's eyes, follows all his movements with keen interest!* The man is worth tempting, is a big enough prey to deserve all the snares of Hell. It is possible that the Devil has not yet understood how it is that he is always given most power over the greatest and the best.

The writer has already begun his task, but the pen moves slowly over the parchment.

"In the beginning was the word."

Faust stops to reflect. Word, after all, might be read as symbol, and that does not convey the sense of "Logos," though it may be its literal equivalent. He is face to face

of his own. The wandering scholar was a well-known character in the Middle Ages, and not a very reputable member of society as a rule. He was a kind of learned free-lance, one who roamed from place to place getting his living by weather-making, treasure-finding, exorcising evil spirits, and, lastly, by holding disputations and arguments with the wise men of the towns through which he passed.

Faust still eyes the stranger with an amused smile, and the little man bows in a deprecating way, and says—

“You made me swelter in a pretty style. What is your pleasure now, great master?”

“Thy name,” says his host, with sudden sternness.

“For one so recently rejecting words as merely symbols, and probing still behind them to the heart of things, the question seems a little trivial!” the student replies, with a touch of malice.

Faust answers, undisturbed by the covert sneer—

“Yes, but with gentlemen like you, one generally learns the essence from the name. The titles are descriptive—Beelzebub, Liar, and the like. Come, thy name!”

Mephistopheles answers with an evasion; perhaps there is some truth in the superstition that he who knows a spirit's real name has power over him.

“A part I am,” he says, “of that great power, which, still contriving evil, brings forth good.”

“What means this riddle?”

And the stranger continues—

“I AM THE SPIRIT OF PERPETUAL NEGATION!”

(*Tremendous* conception of a devil, beside which Milton's Fiend dwindles down to the proportions of an over-ambitious and rebellious man, and Dante's Lucifer becomes a grotesque and unreal idol.

On one side, life, energy, love, productiveness; on the other, the “principle of negation!”

Only one attribute, yet one that is so all-embracing, that you shall not name one quality that makes for good to

which it is not in perpetual opposition. Creation in all its forms, defied by negation in its chill shapelessness.)

Having formally announced himself, the Devil drops his serious tone, and changes it for a half-bantering, sarcastic manner which is an echo of Faust's. He proceeds with a long explanation.

"I am the principle of negation," he repeats, "and with both right and justice on my side. I hold the one great boon creation merits—destruction! . . . If you would like another of my titles, I am Sin! Evil is my peculiar element!" He ends with a little biting laugh, and is silent.

Faust also is silent for a moment or so. He is somewhat in the position of a man who has laid nets for small birds overnight, and on coming in the morning finds an eagle in the meshes of his snare. He perceives that a great deal of power may lurk concealed behind this harmless mask of a travelling student, with a smiling, beardless face and caustic manners—this stranger who will not give his name, or go beyond such generalities as admitting himself to be part of that power still contriving evil.

Further, our philosopher has the uneasy suspicion that the humble student who has entered into his abode in such strange fashion, and now stands in front of him with down-cast eyes and folded hands, is at the present moment busy reading his thoughts, and vastly amused by them.

Faust pulls himself together abruptly, and makes one more effort to find out exactly what it is that confronts him.

"Thou nam'st thyself a part, yet as whole I see thee here."

The little man is ready with his answer. "Alas!" he murmurs humbly, "I am but telling you the modest truth. The world's crowning folly, man, esteems himself a whole; but I must still confess myself a part! Only a portion of that whole which once comprised the world; part of that darkness which gave birth to light—proud light, that now would dominate its parent."

He waits for an answer which does not come ; and then continues talking in the same strain, watching Faust from under his eyelashes and from behind the cover of his fluent tongue. He laments the fact that darkness at present seems decidedly to be on the decrease ; offers the amiable hope that it may some day recover the lost ground ; ends by looking forward to the time when chaos and gloom once more shall rule over everything.

Faust is roused to wholesome anger at the devilish malice underlying the honeyed accents ; at the ruin of peoples, continents, worlds, which this smooth-faced semblance of a man is calmly contemplating, and answers hotly.

The Devil perceives his mistake, or has perhaps achieved his end ; in any case, he has no intention of creating a wholesome repulsion, or in any way quarrelling with Faust, and sets quickly to work to gloss over his previous statements. It is true, he repeats, that he represents the principle of destruction ; but, as his learned friend has just remarked, his power is doomed to ultimate defeat ; and even now, when putting forth all his force, everything of any real consequence always seems able to overcome and to defy him. So, really at the bottom, he is a *perfectly* innocuous devil !

The position Mephisto has now taken up is a very skilful one, and well adapted to make use of the weakness of his enemy ; for whether it is that Faust believes this last remark, or whether the philosopher is only looking forward to the inevitable triumph of good over evil (and forgetting the many inevitable triumphs that evil will have over good in the meantime), certain it is that he drops into the dangerous mistake of underestimating the strength of his adversary.

Secure in his own power, the man laughs at the Devil before him, and advises him to attempt an easier task than that of setting at naught the principle of productiveness.

Mephisto promises to think the matter over ; to discuss

it the next time they meet, and humbly asks permission to retire.

"Why my permission?" echoes Faust. "The door stands there; the window also is unbarred; the chimney, too, so I have heard, occasionally serves your purpose."

The little man rubs his hands with assumed nervousness, and his suavity of manner increases tenfold as he proceeds to explain.

"A mere formality, a little difficulty, a diagram upon your threshold bars my way! One angle, incorrectly drawn, allowed my entrance—the exit is another matter! The window? But, alas! the rules of Hell forbid our leaving by another path than that we came by."

Faust's contempt for his adversary increases. One of the simpler diagrams drawn on the floor (one which is, however, credited with the power of keeping out evil spirits), and this devil, evidently a powerful one, is as much kept prisoner as one of the least of the evil crowd.

He begins to jest with his captive. "So, then, you gentlemen have rules? Why, one could make a bargain with you, sure of its being kept."

"Assuredly. But now I beg again your kind permission to retire."

His captor smiles. "Nay, of thine own free will thou enteredst in. I may not catch the Fiend a second time—am loth to let him go!"

Then the Devil, seeing that entreaty will not accomplish his object, tries stratagem, and as evil is a subject upon which Faust has still nearly everything to learn, he is immediately successful.

The little man therefore feigns graceful acquiescence, but asks that, if forced to remain, he shall be granted permission to show off, to exhibit some of the tricks of the trade.

Faust, fancying himself secure behind the barrier of his knowledge and strength, consents; allows the Devil to practise before—or rather, *on him—and thus the first step,*



*which is the difficulty of the whole position, is quietly got over!*

Mephistopheles calls to the spirits of the air; these enter from all quarters and fill the bare room with strange visions and illusions, and before many minutes are over Faust is lying back in the great armchair in a semi-trance, his head stuffed with carnal dreams. The diagram on the floor is quickly destroyed, and the Devil passes out through the open door with a mocking laugh—leaving Faust to wake later to a partial knowledge of what has occurred, and forcing from him the bitter exclamation—

“Alas, I have been tricked—tricked and betrayed!”

## CHAPTER V

### A GLIMPSE AT THE PROLOGUE

THE next Scene (the Fifth) is the final one in this part of the play. It is short, and after it there is such an abrupt transition to another style of life and thought, and such a change even in the hero of the piece, that it will be well to pause for a little and think over what we have learnt of Faust's character, before we pass on with him to his renewed physical youth, which asserts itself with such overwhelming vigour that his mental traits for the time being are all submerged under the wild flood of his passions.

The outward man, as we know him now, is a familiar type of the Middle Ages — a long-bearded, venerable recluse; an alchemist and a philosopher; one occupying a position in the town in which he lives, somewhat analogous to a professorship in a modern university. He is respected by everyone, looked up to for his learning, and feared a little perhaps on account of it, by all except those few who have had occasion to find out the kind heart underneath the stern brain, or by the fewer still who remember his warm, impetuous youth, and still catch gleams of it behind the repellant mask of grim humour and cynicism which he has taken up.

Superficially, therefore, we find in Faust a *teacher*—one equally renowned for his great learning and his caustic courtesy, which, by the way, renders his instructions and admonitions tenfold more impressive than if they had been administered with less suavity.

Superficially all this! But behind the mask—what a different tale!

In place of the steadfast mind stored with knowledge, there is the hopeless heart well-nigh bruised unto death with the shocks of perpetual disappointment in a search after truth.

Instead of the teacher, there is the neophyte—one whose feet have as yet travelled but a little way along the "path," and who is now encountering the spiritual storms which always meet the beginner. In his case these have been enough to daunt the bravest, for after a certain amount of progress in *any* direction, some power has stepped forward and hurled him back again to the beginning of the way.

Now, as we are watching this life, not on the same level as we watch those around us to-day, but are looking at it from a vantage ground from whence we can glance back to cause and see onward to effect, we will go behind and beyond Faust's present despair and coming temptation to find out the reason and the need for it.

*Nothing ever happens by chance!* His trials are part of the unalterable order of things. They are the easterly winds which bring in the spring, and whose mission it is to blight and destroy all that which is not strong enough to resist them, lest that which is weak and unsuitable shall bear fruit.

To understand cause and effect in this particular instance we must turn back to the prologue of the play, where the scene is laid in Heaven, and the *dramatis personæ* are the Deity, his attendant Angels, and Satan.

It is a quaint little scene, evidently founded on one of these mediæval miracle-plays which were such a curious mixture of ignorant piety and unintentional blasphemy. It is very short, and really serves only as a glimpse into the workings of fate, and the quaint characters of anthropomorphic Deity and Devil are used merely as puppets to speak this warning: "Nothing ever happens by chance. Nothing happens except by design."

We will summarise the prologue briefly for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the play.

Mephisto (Satan) comes up to Heaven to have a chat with the Almighty, and among other topics introduces the folly of one called Faust, and laughs at his alternating moods of fervour and despair. To this the Power of Good answers in a parable, saying that only the gardener looking at the leaf-buds in the early spring foreknows the coming flower and fruit. It is a prophecy of the glorious destiny in front of this individual soul.

The Devil sneers, and wagers that, were he left free hands, Faust would end otherwise than in a beautiful and rich maturity.

Free hands are granted to the Power of Evil (for Faust has reached that stage of development in which this is his next boon), but with permission to Mephisto to tempt to the uttermost is added the divine warning of his inevitable failure—

“ . . . 'Tis granted thee ! Divert  
This mortal spirit from his primal source ;  
Him, canst thou seize, thy power exert  
And lead him on thy downward course ;  
Then stand abashed when thou preforce must own,  
A good man in his darkest aberration  
Of the right path is conscious still.”

So Faust receives the mark of divine care which he will not recognise as such for many a weary year ; and the heavens close, the angels and archangels follow their Master into the invisible, and Mephisto remains below and ends the scene with a neat little soliloquy !

. . . . .

So the Devil comes back to earth, and thinks over the snares to be set for the soul that has been delivered over to him.

He resolves finally to attack the spiritual through the physical ; to increase the burden of Faust's bodily infir-

mities until it is well-nigh unbearable, and then to try and persuade the philosopher to accept the gift of renewed youth. That once accomplished, circumstances will no doubt arise that can be turned to advantage ; for, given long-repressed passion suddenly let free in the mad whirl of life into which he intends to thrust his captive, it will be strange indeed if no opportunity should offer which would secure the final entanglement of the victim. He knows his prey too well to suppose that fear of consequences (that powerful stimulus to virtue) will weigh with Faust for an instant.

Thus, "still contriving evil," the Devil is still unconsciously laying the foundation for future good ; for that which Faust needs next for the perfecting of his character is *experience*—experience of human joys and sorrows, and SINS !

There are two things essential to evolution (spiritual as well as physical) : first, the struggle for one's own life ; next, the struggle for the life of others ! Of these two Faust possesses one (the former) as an unalterable part of his spiritual individuality. Let come what may, his desire for greater knowledge (using the word in its widest sense) will never be extinguished. It may be disturbed, distorted, submerged even for the time being, but having grown to be the central idea of his real self, it can *never* be done away with !

But of the necessity of the struggle for the life of others, he has still much to learn. Spiritual egoism not only *can* exist, but is a very common quality.

The great philosopher has a certain affection for humanity, and acknowledges to a certain extent its claims upon him. Amongst his aspirations after truth there is the desire to learn not entirely for his own profit, but also that he may be in the position to lead others ; the wish to reach mental heights, partly that he may turn round from them and teach those below. But for a mixing and mingling with the crowd, for a working shoulder to shoulder

together with them towards that height, there is no place in his conceptions.

*Intensely conscious of the fatherhood of God, he has yet become almost oblivious of what that implies—namely, the brotherhood of mankind!*

Not a brotherhood with all on the same level! Some elder, some younger, but still all brothers to Faust as man. Not a distant crowd to be taught, or a roomful of students to be lectured to.

And for the perfecting of his character, it is absolutely necessary now that Faust should be brought back again to close, living contact with the half-forgotten human sorrows and joys, and sins, and be reminded of the lessons he once drew from them.

Perhaps, of the three, sin will be his greatest teacher this time. It preaches the reality of brotherhood, and makes man realise the closeness of the tie which binds humanity together with greater power than any other thing on earth!

We may suffer, apparently alone.

We may rejoice, with seemingly nothing between us and the opened heavens into which we are gazing.

But we cannot sin for one moment without the act bringing with it, as an inherent part of itself, the scent and the taste of humanity!

## CHAPTER VI

### THE COMPACT WITH MEPHISTO

*Scene 4.*—To return to the play. The scene is the same—the philosopher's cell. Faust is still sitting there silent and alone; but some time has elapsed since the curtain last went down, and the Devil has used the interval skilfully. What artifices he has employed, what agencies he has set to work, we are not shown; but it is evident from the commencement that a subtle poison has been acting on Faust's body and brain, for the man we see now is not the same as we left him a comparatively short time ago.

Faust looks a decade older, so much more shrunken and bowed; and there is a peevish, fretful air about him that seems strangely out of keeping with his usual character.

The great eyes, too, that were once such living, changeable things—now alight with divine enthusiasm, now afire with scorn—have lost all their brilliancy, and are merely dull and vacant; while the black rings which encircle them speak of ill-health and sleepless nights and pain.

Faust sits huddled up in the big chair gazing vacantly in front of him, looking at nothing, doing nothing; and shivering from time to time, when he rouses himself for a moment to pull the worn fur cloak closer round his shoulders, and then relapses into his previous semi-stupor.

In front of him the desk is still book-strewn, but the dust lies undisturbed even here now, and it and the moths between them have complete sovereignty in this little world at last.

Faust's body has asserted itself with power, and has subdued and dulled the mind! Nature is having her revenge for the years of neglect and contempt.

As a well-treated and well-cared-for servant, the body would have worked ungrudgingly for a lifetime, accepting the inferior position as its due, but the lower nature has received no consideration, and the day has come when it is treating the mind with the same harshness that it has itself suffered.

. . . . .

After a period of silence that reigns in the chill discomfort of the sunless cell, there comes a sharp knock at the outer door. Faust answers fretfully without moving: "Who is it now that would disturb my rest? Come in."

He is apparently not heard, for the summons is repeated, and he replies again wearily: "Come in."

A bright voice outside cries: "*Three* times the invitation must be given."

"Well then, come in."

This time the door is opened, and a handsome but saturnine-looking youth steps lightly into the room. He is dressed in scarlet from head to foot, in the latest fashion, in doublet and hose; a rapier hangs at his side, and a jaunty cock's feather graces his cap.

He lets the door slam after him and crosses quickly over to where Faust is sitting. It is Mephistopheles in his latest guise, and he is a startling and almost a pleasant apparition of warmth and life thus suddenly breaking into the cold cheerlessness of the cell.

"Three times. That's right!" he cries in a full, rich voice, standing over Faust and looking down upon him. Then he continues cheerily: "And now I've come to drive thy gloom away."

Faust looks up at him without evincing much surprise. It is evidently not the first visit. But the costume seems new, for his eyes linger for a moment on the other's gar-



ments, which are like a gleam of sunshine and life in the midst of shadows and sterility.

Mephistopheles notes the glance and the grudging approval, and continues gaily: "Yes, I have come tricked out in brave array with gold and crimson set on youthful limbs. I give thee good advice if thou wilt have it. Take on the same gay trappings."

There is an insolence of youth and health about the tempting Fiend as he stands smiling down at the old philosopher. Desire and warmth seem to radiate from him. It is a battle of colour—red against grey. An unequal conflict, a positive against a negative.

The old man frowns at him and mumbles in answer to his flippant invitation: "Should I feel less these earthly pains and limitations in other clothes? Too young to live untroubled by desire, too old to play. What has the world to offer me?"

"Too old to play." It is his answer to the veiled suggestion. Perhaps he has realised that the Devil is offering him change of body as well as change of garment, and does not believe that a young body could and would act so powerfully upon a weary mind as to push it out of all recognition or notice for a while.

Mephistopheles does not answer. He contents himself with standing there, an embodiment of smiling, pleasure-loving, joyous youth. And the mere sight of him seems to annoy the old man, troubling him strangely, reviving faded memories, stirring forgotten desires. He begins to talk again, more to himself than to the other though, and murmurs fretfully: "*Entbehren*<sup>1</sup> sollst du, sollst entbehren! That is the refrain of life's song. One that grows harsher, louder with the advancing years. *Entbehren* sollst du, sollst entbehren."

The youth shrugs his shoulders. If people choose to spend their life in renouncing when they might spend it in enjoying, more fools they. Faust, getting no answer or

<sup>1</sup> *Entbehren*: to abstain, avoid, give up, renounce.

sympathy in that quarter, wanders off into a querulous complaint about his recent illness, his bad nights, and consequent restless days—his endless petty bodily pains and discomforts which tie his mind down to the sordid things about him. Then he bursts into a sudden fit of hot anger at the powerlessness of the sovereign mind over outward things ; at the way in which it can be cramped and tied down, kept captive in its own Vatican, by the secular arm. Alas for the power of the body over the soul !

“ . . . Over the outward things this ruler has no power, and these now make my life a thing of dread—make death desirable—make death a wished-for boon ! ”

The last few words give us a sudden glimpse into the altered state of Faust's mind. The desire for death is not new to him ; we saw him carry this wish almost into action not so long ago ; but the motive which prompted the deed *then* was a noble despair of gaining that for which he sought on earth, and a forlorn hope that beyond the grave might lie that enlightenment for which he worked here in vain. At present death is merely invoked as a rest-bringer, as the change which will put an end to his manifold bodily troubles.

Mephistopheles has listened to the tirade with quiet amusement, and now that Faust pauses for a minute, he remarks reflectively : “ And yet I never yet remember death a welcome guest. ”

Faust storms on, without heeding the interpolation. “ Happy the man whom death has crowned with blood-stained laurels on the battlefield. Happy the one whom death takes gently from a maiden's arms. . . . Ah ! would that I had fallen dead before that mighty spirit, my soul *drawn* out of me, in ecstasy of joy ! ”

There is a minute's silence, while Faust meditates bitterly upon the common fate of man, which is to strive and strain for years towards a rare ideal ; then once to come within sight of, or even within touch of it, and to live forever afterwards in the enduring banalité of an anti-

climax! Life is not artistic. Its composition is at fault. Close upon the height or crisis should come the change, and then the end!

It is Mephistopheles who brings the philosopher back to the commonplace by remarking again in the same reflective tone: "And yet a certain person did not drink a certain cup, some nights ago."

Faust flushes angrily. "You play the spy, it seems."

The Devil repudiates the imputation with a deprecating gesture, that reminds one for an instant of the humble travelling scholar, and says in explanatory tones: "Though not omniscient, I must yet see much." (*Sous-entendu*, unavoidably).

Faust cannot quarrel with so natural an explanation, and his increasing anger is thrown back upon himself. The scene just recalled to him, when childish memories and associations proved strong enough to hold him back from so great a venture, seems puerile and ridiculous when viewed from his present standpoint. He is ashamed of the part he played—ashamed of its having been noticed and quietly criticised by the self-contained, worldly-wise companion now with him.

He looks back upon the episode through the eyes of his visitor, and it seems to grow more foolish and immature every moment. The presence of this well-dressed man-about-town makes Faust aware of a certain rusticity in himself of which he had not previously been conscious! Sin has a marvellous knack of making virtue look country-bred, and it is probably with a view of defeating this contretemps that the older religions ordain that a man shall lead a man's life before aspiring to saintship.

To cover a growing confusion, Faust begins to talk again, and rails against those "spells, illusions, follies, which flatter and surround the soul, keeping it still a willing captive in its earthly cell."

Then for the first time in the interview, Mephisto looks

at the philosopher steadily, and as their eyes meet, over the Devil's face there spreads a smile of quiet amusement and derision.

It is the last touch! Faust rises to his feet; the remaining bond of self-control snaps; the pent-up passions of dissatisfaction and disappointment which have been accumulating for years break loose, and in wild language the man *curses* all that he has revered until now. Curses all that is best and holiest in life, all that tends to help and ennoble: man's belief in himself, man's yearning for an honoured name, all affection for possessions and kindred! Curses the power of love, of hope, of faith—"And patience be cursed most of all," he cries. . . . As Faust's voice stops, there is an echo outside—a strange wailing in the wind which sweeps round the house, followed by a sudden oppressive silence.

The old man has sunk back into his chair exhausted, and the figure in scarlet watches him from under his eyelashes without moving.

Again the strange eerie wailing in the wind, and ever so slight a sign from the watching Tempter, at which the sound appears to grow louder and come nearer.

Another oppressive silence, followed by a sudden stormy gust which blows open the casement, when the long, low wailing cry comes in through the open window into the room, and drifts moaning up into the shadows of the groined roof. Three times it circles the room, hidden in shadows; now loud and seeming almost to touch the silent figures; now soft, as if it were drifting right away; then it rises to the shadows of the roof once more, and settles into a rhythmic minor chant, a swaying chorus sung by invisible singers—

"Woe! Woe!  
Thou hast destroyed it!  
The beautiful world!  
Woe! Woe!  
Thou hast destroyed! Destroyed!"

The chant has almost died away, when suddenly out of the centre of the sound, a sweet voice peals out in the major key :

"Create! Create!  
Build it again  
In thy heart,  
The beautiful world!  
Create! Create! Create!"

And the chorus follows, and swells and strengthens the central song, and the theme is ever creation, renewed life, love, and joy ; and an exquisite, unknown melody throbs and grows, till it fills the cell with music, and the very stones seem vibrating with comprehension and sympathy. Even at the last, when the voices have died away, this melody seems to be still lingering in the room, ever repeating itself in some medium more subtle than air.

"You hear them, these protégés of mine," says the Tempter at last. "They've given you some good advice ; are trying, with me, to tempt you out of morbid isolation, into a life of pleasure and of action."

Still Faust does not move.

In the wildness of his despair, he has committed the crime of all crimes. He has indeed shattered a beautiful world, and seems to have expected to perish dramatically among the wreckage, and even now appears to be waiting for fire from heaven as a result of his tremendous apostasy ; to be expecting a *coup de grâce*, which does not come. IN THE IMMENSITY IT IS MERELY AS IF A CHILD HAD BROKEN HIS TOY !

"Come," says the Tempter gently. "The worst companionship is better than this dreadful isolation, would make you feel a man again among your fellow men. I cannot boast myself of being in the very highest station, but I will give you something better than the worst, and I will be your servant and companion through it all."

It is thoroughly sound common-sense advice. The remedy is the best one possible under the circumstances.

Faust is bound to admit this inwardly ; he is conscious of being overstrained ; he is beginning to be afraid of himself ; there is something very tempting in the idea of stooping below his own level for a while. It would be such a rest. It would be balm to his wounded self-confidence to be for a time with those who are his undoubted inferiors.

After realising with such horrible distinctness his own insignificance and foolishness, it might be even perhaps the saving of his sanity to turn back to where others stand and thus regain the assurance of his own manhood and virility.

Again, if he refuses the offer, what else has he before him? The alternative is the same life he has led until now—the same monotonous daily round of work and discomfort, robbed of the one thing that made it always bearable, sometimes beautiful.

“What are you asking in return for all your service?” he says abruptly ; and Mephisto knows that the second position is won !

“Oh, there is time enough for that,” says the Devil lightly.

A flash of his old humour comes back to Faust. “No, no, the Devil is an egoist. He does not do a thing for dear love’s sake. Such humble service might conceal a hidden peril. What are the terms?”

The youth in scarlet shrugs his shoulders with a well-if-you-will-have-it air. “My terms are these, then. *Here* I serve you, ready to obey your lightest sign, or to fulfil your smallest wish. *Yonder*, the case would be reversed !”

“Yonder,” repeats Faust bitterly. “Yonder does not disturb my calculations. This is the earth whereon my joys abide ; this sun the one that shines upon my grief. Cure me these woes, and I will ask no more of who shall serve or who shall rule in yonder sphere.”

“That is the mood,” cries Mephisto gaily, “in which to make a bargain ! Now you shall have such pleasure as never mortal touched before.”

"Such pleasure!" echoes Faust mockingly. "Such joys as *quite* to satisfy a yearning soul! Wondrous food that leaves one empty! Red gold that slips between your fingers to the ground! A girl that eyes her neighbour while you have her in your arms! Make haste and bring this fruit that's rotten ere it's ripe."

The Tempter laughs. "Your first request were easily complied with. I have such doubtful treasures as you mention; but, friend, I also give you true assurance of a time of peace and *fulness* of enjoyment!"

The old man lifts his eyes and looks steadily at his visitor; at the warmth of colour in his garments, at the glitter of the gold trimmings, at the fineness of the lace, at the shapely limbs, at all that their supple youthfulness suggests, and then answers solemnly—

*"If with the powers at thy command thou canst so flatter and beguile me, that at some distant day I sink to rest contented with myself, may that day be my last!"*

"Agreed!"

"Agreed! If I shall ever call the passing moment fair, and bid it tarry, then may the clock stand still, the index fall. Then heap those chains upon me, thy service at an end, and mine begun!"

Faust's words need little comment. If the Devil with earthly pleasures (which are all he has at his command) can induce absolute self-satisfaction in Faust, the day of his spiritual death will indeed have dawned; and when Mephisto a moment later suggests a written agreement, the philosopher laughs at the precaution, knowing that the future depends upon his own self-development or degeneration, and will not be made a whit the better or the worse by a scrap of parchment, whatever might be written on it.

Mephisto, however, does not see things in this light, and, to please his visitor, Faust allows the contract to be duly drawn up, and signed with ink that is his own blood, and the Devil, having carefully supervised the operation, pockets the parchment.

"Thou needst not fear that I shall break my word," says Faust wearily, as he notes the action. "My vow is in exact accordance with the tenor of my life" (he seems to refer to the words in which he defined his ruling passion as an endless search for something, which, when gained, would leave him contented with himself). "But until now, I've aimed too high! Thine is the rank to which I must belong. The mighty spirit despised me, and nature thrusts me from the very entrance to her secret temples. My web of thought is rent from top to bottom—I am *sick* of knowledge! Let me drown my mad, wild yearnings in the depths of passion! Let pain and joy, success and failure, follow one another in quick succession, mingle and change. Let come what may, or good or bad, if but the restless tide of incident be still unflagging and unceasing. Action is man's proper sphere!"

Is it fancy, or is a change creeping over the philosopher's face and manner? He looks younger, brighter, than a few minutes ago, before the compact was signed. His voice has gained in clearness, and there is a new ring of strength in it.

The youth in scarlet responds to his enthusiasm, and answers gaily: "There shall be no limits set for you. Touch, try, taste of each fleeting pleasure as it passes."

"Pleasure!" Faust interrupts. "I did not speak of pleasure, friend; I spoke of action and excitement. Purged of the wish TO KNOW, I crave in future but TO FEEL!—to feel each pang and thrill that troubles or impels mankind; to taste not only pleasure, but also human sorrows: man's hates and fears and loves. *All* that is felt and borne by *all* mankind, I would experience, till my small self is knitted to their selves, breathes with them, is part of them, and shares at last their common doom!"

. . . . .

Faust has thus renounced, so he thinks, all further yearning for knowledge; but the very same sentence betrays



the old motive under the new course of action. When the Devil pulls him out of the isolation in which he has hitherto lived, a considerable change takes place in Faust's surroundings. He passes from the contemplative to the active side of creation ; crosses over from the intellectual plane to the emotional ; but the central idea of his being does not suffer in the transfer, and re-appears at once with identical aim and undiminished strength. The desire to feel is only the old desire to know, thinly disguised under a fresh name !

One new factor, however, has to be noticed. The future experiences are to be gained *in common with others*. It is the first step along the road towards gaining knowledge or experience, *for the sake of others* !<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .  
<sup>1</sup> "Faust is a man who has quitted the ways of vulgar men, without light to guide him on a better way ! No longer restricted by the sympathies, the common interests, the common persuasions, . . . he feels himself to be peculiar—the victim of a strange and unexampled destiny. Not as other men, he is *with*, and not *of* them.

"There is misery here, nay, as Goethe has elsewhere wisely remarked, there is the beginning of madness itself. It is only in the sentiment of companionship that men feel assured and safe. To all doubts and mysterious questionings of destiny, their sole satisfying answer is—OTHERS DO AND SUFFER THE LIKE. . . . Were there but one man in the world, he would be a terror to himself.

"Now it is as this one man that Faust regards himself. He is divided from his fellows, cannot answer with them, 'Others do the like' ; and yet why or how he is specially to do or suffer will nowhere reveal itself. For he is still in the gall of bitterness. Pride, and an entire though secret love of self, are still the mainsprings of his conduct. . . . A ravenous hunger for enjoyment haunts him. . . . To invest a man of this character with supernatural powers, is but enabling him to repeat his errors on a larger scale. Go where he will, he will find himself again in a conditioned world. . . . Were he all-wise and all-powerful, he might be contented ; scarcely otherwise.

"The poorest human soul is infinite in wishes, and the infinite universe was not made for one, but for many.

. . . . .  
 "Vain were it for Faust, by heaping height on height, to struggle towards the infinite ; while to that law of self-denial by which alone

Mephistopheles is dissatisfied at the result of Faust's first request. His mission is that of tempter, and he has no wish to change it into that of teacher, and with a whimsical expression he quotes Wagner's platitude: "Art is long, and time is fleeting." Faust must remember that he also, as well as the "earthworm," has his limitations, and the wish to sound the whole gamut of human emotions is but another attempt to transcend the common lot of earth, and to exercise the functions of Deity.

"I wish it!" says Faust peremptorily.

Mephistopheles explains quietly that he must confine himself to possibilities; and the enthusiast answers wildly: "What am I, then, that I cannot even gain the poor crown of humanity?"

"Thou art," replies the other with painful common-sense, "just what thou art! All the high heels and borrowed wigs have not increased thy mental height one inch. Thou art, just what thou art!"

It is a cold douche upon the poetic fire; but Faust wearily admits the truth of the observation. All his acquired knowledge has certainly not brought him a hair's breadth nearer to the infinite.

Then Mephisto, having brought genius once more down to the level of ordinary man, begins the lesson again. "Therefore, as you at last perceive the truth, and view things as they are—why! make the best of life, before it slips away! You speculative dreamers are like some fool led by an evil spirit by the nose in ceaseless circles round a narrow wilderness, while all around there lie fair woods and pleasant pastures! Have you not got a body,

man's narrow destiny may become infinite within itself, he is still a stranger. . . ."—*Carlyle's Essay on the Helena*.

The long note may be excused, for it is almost a summary of the play. The last paragraph is the whole plot in a few words. This essay was a tremendous prophecy, for, when written, of the second part of Faust nothing had been given to the world but Act III.

got a heart and hands and feet, and all the rest—then use them to enjoy yourself ! ”

There is silence for a while between this strangely assorted pair, and then Faust turns round with an abrupt movement of assent. The Devil sees the advisability of taking him while the mood lasts ; urges that they shall go hence with speed.

Faust still lingers. Now that the time has actually come for him to rise and leave the cheerless place where he has lived and laboured for so long, he becomes aware that he is more attached to it than he knew. At the moment of parting, and when viewed in contrast to the riot and glare of the outer life, of the outer world into which they are going, the cell seems suddenly to become desirable and attractive. It assumes the aspect of a quiet and a pleasant refuge.

Further, a painful consciousness of rusticity, and a remembrance of social awkwardness comes over the old philosopher as he looks forward to the new life into which he is about to plunge, and he shrinks back and begins to make excuses.

In his own hermitage, surrounded by familiar objects, seated in the great carven chair, and dressed in his academic robes, Faust will receive anyone, from the highest to the wisest in the land, with untroubled and fluent courtesy ; but to go shorn of all these wrappings into who knows what company, and there to push and jostle with the crowd for a place—this is a different matter, and an ordeal which he fears to face.

Characters such as Faust's are admirably described in a little essay by Emerson on “ Society and Solitude.”

“ Those constitutions which can bear open day throughout the dealing of the world must be of mean and average structure, . . . such as iron and salt, atmospheric air and water. But there are metals, like potassium and sodium, which, to be kept pure, must be kept under naphtha.

“ Nature protects her own work. To the culture of the

world, an Archimedes or a Newton are indispensable; she guards them by a certain aridity. If there had been good fellows, fond of dancing, post, and clubs, we should have had no 'Theory of the Sphere,' no 'Principia.'

"They had that necessity for isolation which all genius feels."

A little later on Emerson ascribes this lack of manner, this aridity, to want of animal spirits, and ends by saying that latent in every constitution there is a genial heat which can be brought out and developed by the friction of society.

Mephistopheles waves away Faust's excuses, and encourages him to proceed in his venture, in words that are an echo of these.

Faust, still seeking to gain time and make delays, asks how the start is to be made, where the horses, equipage, and retinue are to come from.

For answer the Devil spreads out his magic travelling cloak; and this bears them away on its folds to the new land and new scenes.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE STUDENTS' WINE-SUPPER

SCENE 5 takes us to the famous Auerbach cellar of wine-vault, a public place of entertainment of a kind that exists no longer. It is something between a bar and a club (for clubs have not yet come into being); it is a meeting-place for merry fellows who drink and dawdle their lives away under its arches with great satisfaction, and who are more than content with their fate if mine host continues to give them credit, provided the early morning headaches which follow their carousals are not worse than can be tolerated.

There are only four of the usual customers to-night for some reason, but these make the most of themselves; and the air is so thick and heavy that one can hardly see across the room, and the shouting and singing and laughing and stamping of feet combine to make such an uproar that, were not one gifted with eyes, one would certainly guess the party to consist of quite double its number.

One of the jovial crew, however, seems to feel a certain temporary depression (caused by the smallness of the party perhaps), for he complains of the dulness of the evening, and his next neighbour considerably enlivens things by promptly pouring a pot of wine down his back. This very nearly leads to a fight; but the strongest man in the party manages to restore peace by shouting: "Now then, the first that quarrels gets chucked out! I'm going to sing!

"Runda, Runda, RUNDA-DINELLA-AH!"

"Save us!" cries another. "Has no one any cotton-wool? He'll break the drums of my ear before he has done!"

"Ah," remarks the singer in a self-satisfied voice, "you want to be in an echoing vault like this to appreciate the full power of a bass voice like mine—Runda-A-AH!" and the others join in in self-defence, including the man who protested, and all try to sing the bass voice down.

The song dies away at last, and there is a slight reaction, not exactly a silence, but a lull, and our lively friend of the wine incident, profiting by this, tries to start a topical song about the Empire. He is quickly suppressed, and roared down by a chorus of "No politics"; and a love-song started by another meets with no better success, and is silenced by jeers. In the end, however, by dint of deafening thumps on the (fortunately) very solid oak table, one of the number secures a hearing and starts an entirely new song, which is approved of. This he is allowed to continue in peace, the others contenting themselves with making a chorus of the last line of each verse :—

"Once in a cellar lived a rat ;  
He feasted there on butter,  
Until his paunch became as fat  
As that of Dr Luther.  
The cook laid poison for the guest,  
Then was his heart with pangs oppressed  
As if his frame love wasted.

As if his frame love wasted, as if his frame love wasted.

He ran around, he ran abroad,  
Of every puddle drinking ;  
The house with rage he scratched and gnawed,  
In vain—he fast was sinking.  
Full many an anguished bound he gave.  
Nothing the hapless brute could save,  
As if his frame love wasted.

As if his frame love wasted—love wasted.

By torture driven, in open day  
The kitchen he invaded.  
Convulsed upon the hearth he lay  
With anguish sorely jaded.  
The poisoner laughed. 'Ha, ha!' quoth she,  
'His life is ebbing fast, I see,  
As if his frame love wasted.'

As if his frame, as if his frame love wasted."

(A. S.)

The song is wildly applauded, and one man, who seems to evince a little sympathy for the rat, draws upon himself the scorn of the rest, and is jeered at and told that his fellow-feeling arises from his own maudlin and love-sick condition.

Sentiment and suffering find scant appreciation in the present company, not so much because of the hardness of their hearts as owing to the thickness of their skulls, and the rudimentary state of their imagination.

As the hubbub subsides, the revellers become aware that two strangers (in whom we recognise Mephisto and Faust) have come in unnoticed, and have sat down at a table close by. Our merry friends proceed to discuss the new pair among themselves with many nudges and side-glances, and in what they take to be undertones.

Frosch, the wit of the party, finally volunteers to find out all about the new arrivals, and vows that they are gentlemen, while Brander, who has forgiven the recent joke, though his back is still damp and his clothes stained for good and all, discusses the matter with him amicably, but gives it as his opinion that they are nothing more than mountebanks.

"Watch them," says Mephisto to his pupil, "and see how lustily and lightly existence may be taken. Each day's a holiday to these gay revellers, wherein, with little wit but much enjoyment, they caper through the daily round, free from all cares, and overcome with happiness."

The old philosopher *does* not answer, but presently, growing restless under such obvious scrutiny, steps forward to the party with a courteous—"Good morrow, gentlemen."

Three of the youths are immediately stricken dumb and gaze with open mouths at his long serious face, white beard, and dark robes, but Siebel the love-lorn, and the oldest of the party, plucks up courage and returns his greeting.

Mephisto then comes forward and throws himself into the breach. "Is it allowed to join your merry party? Then we might balance against the vileness of the wines the choiceness of the company."

"Very good manners," murmurs one of the four; "seems a very decent chap"; and a move is made to welcome the strangers.

But Frosch the wit is keen to test the newcomers, and begins at once in a conversational tone: "Perhaps you came down here by way of Rippach. I suppose you did not stop and dine with Master Hans?"

Now this is a time-worn local joke, for Rippach is one of the villages near (the diligence stops there a few minutes so that the horses may be watered), and a "Hans von Rippach" is slang for a clumsy fool.

Mephisto answers suavely: "Alas, there was not time to stop to-day! A little while ago, however, we had better luck. We paid a lengthy visit, and Master Hans would talk of nothing but his cousins, to whom he sent full many a greeting!"—this with a low bow towards Frosch.

"Ha, ha!—ha, ha! He had you there!" says the wit's neighbour, giving him a poke in his ribs that nearly sends him sprawling on the ground. "He had you there, my friend."

"You wait, I will be even with him," says the discomfited man in an undertone. But Mephisto proves too slippery a customer for such simple folk to entrap, and



before a quarter of an hour has passed he is the hero of the evening, the dearest friend of each one present ; and they are all hanging on his words, holding their sides with laughing, or silent with admiration, just as he wishes—completely under his spell !

Balancing himself on the edge of the table, the Devil takes up a guitar and sings them a song about a flea who became Lord Chancellor, and they applaud wildly. Then he gives them an example of his magical powers by boring holes in the table and making wine flow out of them. They drink so freely of this wondrous vintage that they become quarrelsome and rather unmanageable, and the Devil, seeing that Faust has shrunk back into the shadow of one of the arches and is watching the scene with ill-concealed disgust, fills their silly heads with weird illusions, and while they are stamping up and down the cellar, each one under the impression that he is far away in some castle in Spain, Mephisto beckons to his pupil, and they make their escape.

. . . . .

Thus ends the first experiment, and it seems not to have been a great success. The life in the outer world has begun, and Mephisto has told his pupil that he has brought him here to show how easily and how lightly life may be passed ; but he can scarcely have expected that the philosopher would ever come to enjoy that kind of existence, or that the sight of it would inspire in him any other sensations than those of disgust.

There must be some stronger reason underlying so apparently foolish an action. Perhaps Mephisto still wishes to pose as a harmless and a foolish spirit, one with no great powers, little understanding, and less tact, so that Faust shall feel himself not fathomed, and so be less on his guard.

Or perhaps the motive which prompted the Tempter to

begin with so coarse a scene was the wish to re-instate his pupil in his own self-esteem. In this case the object-lesson was well chosen, as in contact and in contrast with such human animals, Faust is bound to feel his own tremendous superiority.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARGUERITE APPEARS

THE Devil's next step is to take the weary Faust away to the ends of the earth, to a vile hole, half cave, half house, called the Witches' Kitchen (Scene 6). In this loathly den, surrounded by all the paraphernalia of black magic, and in company with unclean beasts, lives an evil hag who prepares love-potions and poisons. Mephisto and she together half persuade, half force, Faust through some revolting ceremonies, which are a caricature of those used by the priests, and pour down his throat the elixir of youth and love—a preparation which, though it cannot indefinitely lengthen life, has the effect of rejuvenating the body, and re-inflaming the youthful passions.

His object accomplished, the Devil brings Faust back again to his native town—young, handsome, and virile; and then begins the Gretchen episode, surely one of the sweetest and saddest love-stories that was ever written.

Scene 7 is the central square of Faust's native town. Facing us is the stately old cathedral, a poem in marble, a beautiful ideal eloquently expressed in stone. Perfect in its outlines and in all its details, from the slender spires which tower up into the spring sky, down to the great wide doors on the earth-level which ever stand open to welcome humanity. The pity of it is that so fair a shrine should have such unworthy custodians. We all know

what the Church of those days was, both ignorant and unclean.

The other sides of the square are occupied by quaint, picturesque little houses, which, however, look dwarfed and poor beside their lofty neighbour.

And there is one bright spot of green, a strip of grass, and some linden trees which shade a path leading from a side door in the cathedral to the priest's quarters. This is a beautiful, joyous bit of colour. Nature has been shut out of so much of the picture that she seems to be determined to make the most of the scrap afforded her; for surely grass is not often so brilliant an emerald, and linden trees elsewhere do not show so tender a hue as here.

The square is deserted at present save for a casual passer-by, for all are either at home busy with household matters, or at mass inside the building; but the pealing bells announce that service is nearly over, and that before long the crowd will begin to stream out.

Faust is leaning against one of the beautiful bas-reliefs which ornament the base of the cathedral, basking in the sunshine, and with a dreamy look in his eyes, watching the play of light and shadow under the lindens, and now and again lifting his head to look at the swallows, the first of the year, who are making great scythe-sweeps down through the air, and then flying away right up into the blue, wild with delight at having got back again to their northern home, and full of thoughts of love-making and mating, and the nest-building to come later on.

Tremendous is the change wrought by the renewal of Faust's youth. We expected the supple limbs, the easy, upright carriage, the dark hair; but the golden age has brought greater gifts than these. The face is still serious and thoughtful, but all that sad look of disillusion has disappeared; the grim lines traced by experience have been smoothed away. There appears to have been some

of the water of Lethe in that elixir of youth ; perhaps even this was its chief ingredient.

Mephisto is within a few paces. We catch a gleam of scarlet amid the shadows of the wide church door, and he seems quite at his ease within the sacred precincts. He is watching the unconscious Faust from his coign of vantage, noting the dreamy eyes that follow the movements of the swallows, and the half smiles that hover round those full young lips. He is very satisfied with the result so far. The man is only half awake as yet ; but the drug has done its work, and done it well.

Faust dreams on, wrapped in the beauty of spring, enjoying the sunshine and the colour and the brightness in a reverie that has no *arrière pensée* to trouble it. He has opened *all* the windows of his heart to let in the glad new life that surrounds him. Nature is celebrating her resurrection, and he is at one with her in the mood.

Faust is roused at last from his day-dreams by the noise of the crowd coming out from church, and in the instant that he looks up, a slender girl comes out of the shadow of the great door, and stands for an instant at the top of the steps, looking out into the spring sunshine.

Her kirtle and little stuff bodice with the snowy linen sleeves denote her as belonging to one of the poorer classes of the town, but her face is the face of a child-Madonna ; and as the sunlight touches the fair hair which frames the oval, it shines like burnished gold, and seems an aureole behind the head of a pale saint.

Her pause is only momentary. She drops her eyes, folds her hands tightly over the big prayer book, and comes quickly down the steps, passing within a foot of where Faust is standing. Like a flash he springs forward and is at her side.

“Fairest lady, may I not offer you my arm and company ?”

The girl gives a little frightened cry, and clutches her big prayer book very tightly as if for support, raising two

great eyes as blue as the sky above them to the handsome, smiling face so close to her own.

"I am neither a lady nor fair," she says brusquely, with a little break in her voice which contradicts the outward appearance of bravery, "and I can go home without an escort," and she turns on her heel and vanishes among the crowd.

"God in Heaven, how beautiful the child is!" cries Faust, still standing like one entranced on the spot where she has left him. "So modest and so good, and yet withal no fool; her answer showed both piquancy and wit."

The Devil saunters down the church steps with the last of the crowd, and Faust turns to him eagerly: "Get me that girl."

"Which?" asks the other laconically.

"The one that passed just now."

"That one. She's fresh from the confessional. I overheard her sorrowing for a score of nothings. I have no power over innocence!"

"She's past fourteen," retorts the young Faust coarsely.

Mephistopheles shrugs his shoulders. The girl is certainly over the age below which intercourse between the sexes is illegal, but . . . He likens the impetuous Faust to Hans Liederlich (the German Don Juan), with whom honour and innocence went for nothing, and who looked upon all maidens as budding flowers which were his to pick, enjoy, and throw away.

Innocence and beauty cannot be had wholesale nowadays, and the Devil goes on mildly to regret that it should be so; when Faust interrupts him in a fury, and threatens to break their compact at once unless his wish is fulfilled in twelve hours, and calls Mephisto a moralising pedant!

Mephisto, who has, probably, only been contradicting him so as to increase his fervour, makes a show of submitting to the inevitable, and promises to do his best if he is given a fortnight to work in; and with this Faust has to be satisfied.

He stipulates, however, that he shall obtain entrance to Marguerite's room that evening when she is absent, and shall thus be able to leave some worthy token of his love, some present—some jewels.

. . . . .

In the next scene, therefore, we are transported to Gretchen's little white bedroom—a dear little nook just under the sloping roof, with one deep-set, tiny-paned window which opens just below the eaves, so that all the summer long the liquid song of the swallows mingles with the child's morning and evening prayers, and all the year round the white pigeons from neighbouring houses come to her window-sill to be petted and fed, and know her so well that they will feed out of her hands, and in snow-storms will even take shelter inside the room.

The chamber is sparsely furnished. Only the necessities of life are there—a little white-curtained bed ; a grandfatherly, sturdy oak chair ; and a table with jug and basin. All the things are of a simple, homely type, but are not unlovely—only crude, primitive.

Away in a corner is the only object of value that the room contains—the mother's marriage chest of carved oak, a long box which serves to hold all Gretchen's simple wardrobe.

The whole effect is one of simplicity and purity. Rooms have their atmosphere, and speak loudly of the occupants to those who can notice the language of inanimate things.

There is but one other hint of the character of the absent. On the window-sill is a pot of myrtle, which, like most of the girls, Marguerite tends with the hope of one day cutting flowers from it for her marriage wreath. Alas, poor Marguerite !

. . . . .

Gretchen comes into the room and stands a long while deep in thought, leaning out on the window-sill, her

mind running on the events, or rather *the* event of the past day ; and one expression after another crosses her transparent face as she recalls the different phases of the incident. Who was he? What made him look at her like that? Was she in truth so fair? Her thoughts begin to take her perilously near forbidden ground, and she rouses herself from her dreams and begins to make ready to go out. But the simple toilet takes longer than is usual, for there are long pauses when she dreams and does nothing, and once she bends her head and blushes as she murmurs : " I know he was a gentleman, he was so—impudent ! "

Then she hurries over the rest of her preparations, so as to get out and away from the troubling, tempting thoughts.

. . . . .

Hardly a second elapses after the girl's exit, when the figure of Mephisto appears in the doorway, and close upon his heels follows the young Faust.

" 'Tis not every girl who keeps her room so spotless," remarks the Devil, with a glance round the humble apartment.

" I pray you, leave me," says Faust abruptly, and the Tempter laughs and vanishes.

Left alone, Faust still stands on the threshold for a minute or two, as if ashamed or afraid to enter. The sight which meets his eyes is apparently so different from what he had expected. The simplicity and white virginity of the room awes him.

In the days when people passed their lives in one town, and grew up in one room, there was time for the developing individuality to impress itself upon its surroundings—to express itself at last so fully in the inanimate things in daily use, that not even the body it inhabited was so sure an index to the underlying mind, as the room in which its life was passed.

After a moment Faust sighs, and comes in, shutting the door after him gently. The flush of excitement and



animalism has died out of his face, leaving him very pale ; there is a troubled look of memory in the depths of his eyes ; he stands near the entrance yet, with the air of one who fears to advance much further upon holy ground.

He notes every detail of the room, from the snowy cover on the bed, down to the crisp sand strewn underfoot, and the simplicity and homely freshness of everything remind him keenly of the absent.

He crosses the room at last in the growing twilight with soft steps, and with a trembling hand pulls aside the white curtains of the bed. There is a faint scent of lavender, very fresh and fragrant, and he lets the drapery fall and sinks down till he is half-kneeling, and his head rests on the white coverlet.

Two new feelings are at work within him—a bitter shame of the errand that brought him, and a strange peace such as he has never known before !

After a while the door is flung open, suddenly and violently, and Mephisto cries out : “Quick, quick—away ! She’s coming.”

Faust jumps to his feet with a quick flush of annoyance at having been surprised in so tender an attitude, but he answers manfully : “Away indeed ! I will return no more.”

“Here is the jewel casket,” continues the other rapidly : “lay it in the press.”

“Shall I ?” says Faust hesitatingly.

Would there be any harm in leaving a token of his love, since he has resolved never to see Marguerite again ?

The Devil gives him scant time for reflection. “Do you want to keep it for yourself ?” he asks shortly. “Well, then——”

He points a lean finger at the marriage-chest, and the lid opens slowly, apparently unaided, when he thrusts the casket inside, and hurries Faust out of the room.

The door is scarcely shut before it is opened again, and Gretchen (who has probably passed them hidden in the shadows of the wide staircase) comes in carrying a small

lamp, but stops short suddenly on the very spot where the Devil was standing a minute before.

"The air is strangely close and sultry, yet out of doors 'tis not so very warm."

She sets down the lamp, and, going over to the window, throws it wide open, and then shudders with a sudden vague fear. Chides herself for her folly; wishes all the same that mother would come up; calls herself an imaginative little goose! and having thus severely taken herself to task, begins to prepare for the night; for she goes to bed almost with the birds and certainly rises with them.

She must be of a perilously sensitive nature to feel the influence of so short a visit from an evil thing. It would not have been powerful enough to affect the ordinary coarse-grained mortal. Most of us can sit for hours in the "magnetic pestilence" engendered by a crowd, and yet go to our homes not much the worse for it, and carrying very little of the taint away with us. Non-receptivity has its advantages.

To drive away her nervousness Gretchen begins to sing. She has slipped off her dress, and looks more like a child-Madonna than ever, as she stands in her long-sleeved white under-gown, undoing the thick plaits, and shaking out the loosened hair till it falls round her shoulders in a shower of gold.

"There was once a king in Thule  
Who was faithful and true unto death."

As she sings, she lays the Sunday dress on the bed and begins to fold it very carefully.

"He sat in the ancient banqueting hall  
With his knights and his princes near."

It is a song that her soldier-brother has taught her, and she trills away in a sweet, fresh voice, till the dress is carefully arranged, then pulls a key out of her pocket and

crosses the room to unlock the chest, and goes down before it on her knees with a little gasp of surprise.

"But I *know* I locked it! Who *could* have put this lovely casket here?" After a pause: "I wonder what there is inside it? The key is here, tied on it with a scrap of ribbon. Would it be *very* wrong, I wonder, to open it and see?"

Apparently she decides that it would not be, or curiosity gets the better of conscience; for a moment later she gives another cry of surprise, as she pulls out a handful of magnificent diamonds.

"Jewels!" she ejaculates. She has seen them before adorning noble and beautiful ladies, but has never had any in her hand. "Jewels—a chain of jewels!"

She cannot take her eyes off the glittering mass; it is like a handful of imprisoned sunbeams. They are *dazzling*; and as the little hand that holds them trembles with excitement, they flash out into myriad wonderful living colours. They are like sunlight, like nothing less than sunlight, streaming down on a summer sea.

"I wonder whose they are," she says at last. "I should *so* like to see them, how they looked on someone—or on myself!" she adds in rather a frightened, awed little tone.

Then, growing braver, she reflects that it would certainly do no one any harm if she put them on, just for a minute. It would not hurt them. She tugs at the gathering string in the neck of her simple white gown till it breaks instead of coming undone, and the garment falls back, revealing a lovely bare neck round which she clasps the chain. Then she must needs dive into the box again, and, finding more things, puts those on also, till she has tricked herself out in the whole parure — rings, bracelets, earrings, and finally a regal tiara, with which she crowns herself, after having hastily fastened up enough of her lovely hair to keep it steady.

When everything is in place and the box is empty, she

risers unsteadily and goes across to the metal disk that serves her as a mirror.

She scarcely knows the reflection that looks back at her. Is that lovely apparition really little Gretchen?—that beautiful creature with lovely bare neck and glorious hair all lit up with a hundred flashing stars the little simple peasant Gretchen?

And the scene ends as she gazes and gazes at this new version of herself, this strange, lovely being which has suddenly come to life, whose beauty she cannot but see, and whose power she dimly realises!

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PROGRESS OF LOVE

FAUST'S resolution to keep away has held good, for in the next scene we find him pacing up and down under the trees, deep in thought, with a quiet, purposeful expression on his face, the outward token of a mind busy with better things, and at rest.

As he walks slowly to and fro, following out some deep train of thought, Mephisto comes suddenly upon the scene. His usually calm face is distorted with rage, and his manner that of a man in a perfect frenzy of passion. Faust looks with surprise at this transformation in so self-contained a fiend, and inquires what is the matter.

"Matter!" replies the other tempestuously. "Matter! By all rejected love! By all the hellish elements! Would I knew something worse to swear by! Were I not the Devil myself, I would hand myself over to him. The jewels—Gretchen's jewels—fallen into the hands of a PRIEST!—gone into the holy maw of Mother Church!"

He relapses into ejaculations, and it is only by degrees that Faust manages to get a coherent story out of him. Apparently Marguerite has shown the gems to her mother (we imagine after she had replaced them in the box), and the mother, in perplexity, has sent for her spiritual adviser. This worthy, seeing the value of the jewels, has at once pronounced the treasure-trove to be a thing of evil, and

declared that the only possible way to sanctify so dangerous a gift would be to devote it to the service of the Virgin.

"With that," continues the Devil, with increasing rage, "the holy man takes up a basket and sweeps the whole set—chain, rings—into it, as if he swept some crumbs away ; gives the two women his benediction and departs—leaving them both much edified !"

"And Gretchen ?"

"Gretchen, poor child," replies Mephisto, with a sudden change of tone, "moves restlessly about the house, and does not know what ails her ; thinks much about the jewels, but more of him who sent them !"

Then Mephistopheles pauses, and waits for this magnificent piece of acting to take effect—an expectation in which he is not disappointed.

Scene 10 is the house of Dame Martha, one of Marguerite's neighbours, a good-natured, silly old woman who has done Gretchen as much harm in her life through injudicious indulgence and ill-advised sympathy as the girl's mother has done harm through over-strictness.

Gretchen's mother and Dame Martha are two secondary characters of great interest: the extremes of two types eminently unfit to bring up youth.

The mother's is a stern but beautiful character. She is a woman who bears the wearing burden of constant ill-health without a murmur, and who takes each new sorrow (and she has had many) meekly and bravely, making no complaint, asking for no sympathy. In the humbler matters of life, too, she acts with sagacity and prudence ; though more well-to-do than many of her neighbours, she indulges in no vain show. Her house is spotless, and furnished with every reasonable comfort, but there is not a hint of luxury, not one useless ornament. Everything is simple, clean, severe ; and in her training of her children

the same system has been carried out. She has brought them up sternly in the fear of God and of herself.

The pity of it is that the well-meant rules have been overdone, and have ruined two young characters. The boy, Valentine, has taken after herself, and she has intensified his natural severity until all softness has disappeared out of his nature, and he has become an empty-hearted young law-giver and fault-finder.

With Gretchen the result of the system has been even worse, for she inherits her father's pleasure-loving temperament, to which joy is as necessary as sunshine is to flowers; and the mother looks upon all Gretchen's natural longings as evil desires to be sternly and ruthlessly suppressed. In her hard creed *all* pleasure is a snare of the Evil One, and the child is even chidden for lingering over her simple morning toilet to listen to the song of the swallows.

Small wonder, therefore, that, unable to have even the most natural pleasures by lawful means, Marguerite should at last snatch at all the sweetness she can reach by means that are not lawful—that she should make excuses to slip over to Dame Martha whenever she can, so as to get the half-hour's chatter, the sweetmeats, the laughter and the sympathy that she is denied at home.

Dame Martha is all on the other side. Let the child enjoy herself; youth comes but once in a lifetime! Youth *needs* pleasure, and, she does not add, coupled with wise discipline.

So Gretchen gets into the way of slipping over to Dame Martha with all her little joys and confidences, and into the way of making pretexts that are not always strictly truthful to account for her absence; for the intimacy is not regarded with favour at home.

It would be difficult to say which of the women is most responsible for Marguerite's tragedy; both contribute largely to it, yet only one will blame herself for it—poor, silly, well-meaning Dame Martha!

Both women have gone on the same rule in one respect.

Both have striven to keep the child "innocent," meaning ignorant. Tell her nothing of all the evil there is in the world; she does not go about alone much; it is not likely that harm will ever come near her; it will be time enough to speak when evil shows signs of approaching.

Let her live in a fool's paradise as long as she can, and be happy in it. Dame Martha puts matters to herself in some such way.

One cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled thinks the mother. Something she cannot help but learn from what she sees about her, but keep knowledge as far away as possible.

Keep the child ignorant—ignorant of the devices of the Evil One; ignorant of the meaning and possible peril of those strange half-thoughts that come to all in the spring time of youth; ignorant as far as possible of the uses of her own body, and of the naturalness of everything; ignorant of all God's wonderful laws about woman, because knowledge of His laws might forsooth do harm!

Knowledge is power, therefore ignorance must be weakness. So leave all the power on the side of evil and its accomplices, and keep the young unarmed and weak; and then trust to the Almighty to preserve them from all harm, giving Him the thanks if all goes straight and well, and apportioning unending blame to quondam innocence if matters turn out otherwise!

This is rather a lengthy digression, and the two women are perhaps of less than secondary interest in the drama; but Goethe has his reasons for even the details of his work, and it has been worth while to turn aside for a moment to scrutinise his views on the way how *not* to bring up youth, more especially as the "innocence" system has still many supporters.

To return to the play. Scene 9 is laid in Dame Martha's parlour, and the old soul is seated there, muttering and grumbling over her knitting, and confiding all her woes to the eternal stocking. Her husband is away a-wandering



again, and this time has been absent for so long that she wonders whether he will ever return. Even to know for certain that he was dead would be better than this suspense.

She grumbles on, half to herself, half aloud, till the door is suddenly thrown open, and Gretchen comes running into the room like a wild thing, breathless and with flushed cheeks.

"Oh, Dame Martha! Oh, Dame Martha!"

"Child, child," replies the startled woman, "what is the matter now?"

Gretchen sinks down on the footstool at her feet, and for answer pulls out a box from under her shawl. "See! *Another!* I found it in my press. A box of ebony, and oh, such lovely things! Lovelier than before! Look! look!" and she holds up to the light some strings of gems which certainly surpass those others in costliness and beauty. There are pearls as well as diamonds this time, a complete set of them; and Dame Martha gives one look and holds up her hands in speechless surprise.

The moment the old woman gets her breath back, however, she says decisively: "*These* must not be shown to your mother, or they would follow the others in no time."

"Just look at them," gasps Gretchen, dangling the chain about in the sunshine, where it sparkles as if it were alive.

"Oh, you lucky girl!" ejaculates Martha. "Come and be dressed up, now."

Gretchen allows herself to be beautified with right good will, but when the process is complete and the pleasure and excitement is at its height, her joy is cooled down by the sudden realisation that none of these wonderful things can ever be worn in public. The baubles immediately lose more than half of their value, and the child's eyes half fill with tears.

"We'll manage somehow," says Dame Martha soothingly. "You'll see! We'll coin some tale or other to quiet your mother; only you must not wear them all at

once. First an earring, then a brooch, and so on. Then you can always come to me, and put them on when we're alone."

Gretchen's conscience wakes up suddenly. "I'm rather afraid there's something wrong about it all. I wonder now who *could* have sent them. Oh, is that mother at the door?" as a loud knock makes itself heard.

Fat old Dame Martha bustles across to the window and peeps through the curtain. "No, it's a gentleman, a stranger," and, forgetting Gretchen's appearance, she calls out: "Come in."

A moment later Mephisto enters the room with his usual jaunty air, and then—his eyes falling on Marguerite decked out in all her jewels—he falls back respectfully a step or two. "I must apologise," he says deferentially, with a sweeping bow to little Gretchen. "I fear I have intruded, disturbed the ladies. In truth I came to make inquiries for a certain Dame Martha Swerdlein, but——"

At this Dame Martha comes forward in a rather agitated way. "'Tis I; perhaps the gentleman has brought some message for me."

The Devil takes her measure in a glance, gives her a short but courteous greeting (a very different affair from the sweeping bow of a moment ago), and says in an undertone: "I see that you have now distinguished company; with your permission I will retire and come again this afternoon," and he prepares forthwith to take his departure.

"Gracious child," says the indiscreet old woman, "he takes you for a lady!"

Again that sudden fatal consciousness of latent power comes to Gretchen, and she flushes to the temples with a feeling that is a strange mixture of pride and humiliation. She conquers her emotion, however, and with a pretty simple manner explains who she is, and adds that the jewels are not her own: it must have been these which occasioned his mistake.

The Devil professes himself vastly relieved at learning her real station in life, allows himself to be pressed to remain, but assures the shrinking girl that it was not alone the gems, but a certain air—a presence—which led him to believe, etc., etc., and then begins to give the message which was the object of his visit.

He informs Dame Martha that her husband is dead (which is true), and that he was with him during the last long illness, and finally saw the corpse committed to consecrated ground in Padua (which is a convenient lie).

The poor old body dissolves in tears, and Gretchen kneels down beside her, throws her arms round her neck, and, forgetting all the silly vanities of a moment ago, like a true woman does her best to be a comforter.

The Devil looks out of the window, and feels a little uncomfortable at the turn matters are taking, but does not see how he can conveniently interfere. His turn comes a few minutes later, when Dame Martha inquires through her tears whether the good-man sent her any love-token. Mephisto catches at the opportunity and begins to improve the occasion from his point of view. He soon spins a neat little story, which effectually stops her grief.

He regrets, he begins in a hesitating way, and then pauses and gives a glance at Gretchen. It is a thousand pities! Would that it had been otherwise; but—there were other outlets for the dead man's money—and, er—love-tokens! 'Twas said, alas, a comely maid in Naples was the last! Then fearing perhaps that the kind-hearted old dame will pardon and forget any mere follies in the dead, Mephisto goes on to hint of a deathbed confession made to him: how Swerdlein bemoaned his errors, but admitted he had much excuse, was driven to sin by an unhappy home, a shrewish wife!

"What?" cries Martha indignantly. "And all my years of drudgery and love forgotten?"

The Devil regrets, hesitates, makes matters a thousand

times worse by what he does not say, promises to bring a witness to second his statements, and, having poisoned the whole of Martha's memories and cast a bitter doubt on humanity at large, again makes a sweeping bow to Marguerite and prepares to leave.

As he passes the girl on his way out, he stoops and whispers, "How goes your heart?" and gives an incredulous little smile as she blushingly disclaims any knowledge of what he means, then looks her straight in the eyes and asks for her presence when he brings his friend, the witness, that evening, in case Dame Martha should perhaps need—or—; and Gretchen promises with, we think, a very fair idea of who this friend may be.

## CHAPTER X

### DAME MARTHA'S GARDEN

SCENE II is merely a connecting link, and consists only of a short interview between Faust and Mephisto, when the latter comes to report progress and make arrangements. Faust is in a wild, reckless mood, and the gentleman in scarlet is more than satisfied with the turn that affairs are taking. "The old fool seems expressly made to play the go-between," he remarks *à propos* of Dame Martha, and then goes on to instruct his pupil in the part he has to play.

This consists in bearing false witness, and swearing to the fact that they both saw the burial at Padua. Faust indignantly refuses to play the *rôle* assigned to him; but his virtuous wrath only makes the Devil smile, and when the angry man goes on to call him a sophist and a liar, the smile merely deepens for a moment and then is politely repressed. This latest *protégé* of his is really too rustic for anything.

However, as Faust really shows signs of serious mutiny, the Fiend conquers his passing mirth and condescends to argue the case.

"Most virtuous man," he says softly, "is this the *first* time in your life that you have borne false witness?" And as the other prepares to defend himself vehemently against the imputation, the gentle voice continues: "Have you perhaps not borne false testimony of God, the world, and all that it contains; of man and all that moves within him?"

It is a startling application of the ninth commandment,

and the quondam teacher, professor, and philosopher is silent, as in a flash he apprehends a whole working system of falsehood, whose upholders and administrators are those of his own class and calling.

The gentle voice continues: "You may have given accurate definitions, may you not, of things of which, perchance, you might have known even a little less than of Herr Swerdlein's death?"

. . . . .

*Scene 12.*—A warm evening early in April in a dear, untidy, old-world garden; not a very big place, but one that is sheltered and private, being surrounded by high moss-covered walls which are half hidden under creepers and climbing roses, and are one sheet of blossom later on in the year. Even now a few buds are showing, and the roses are beginning to throw long green arms over the tops of the walls which bound the street, so that when they have made the southern home-side beautiful, they may give their superfluous sweetness to the outer world.

In the garden itself spring runs riot, for Dame Martha has not the heart to clip or prune anything, beyond what is absolutely necessary, and each plant grows in its own wild, sweet way unchecked and untrimmed, and merely kept in some sort of order and bounds by the demands of its neighbour.

The little enclosure is a wilderness of fresh young green at present (some weeks must have gone by since Easter), and here and there is a bright touch of colour where an almond or an early peach-tree is in bloom, and looks like a pink sunrise broken out into blossom—a kind of flower-incarnation of Easter.

On earth-level there are white narcissi, and pink-tipped daisies in clumps on the turf, for Dame Martha has room in her heart for all the flowers that come, not excepting even the so-called weeds.

The two men arrive at the hour named, and, the business

transactions being over, Dame Martha takes her guests into the garden, and is entertaining Mephisto, while Marguerite does the honours to Faust. The latter takes her duties very seriously, and is religiously pointing out all the beauties of the garden ; while Faust is listening to her conventional remarks, but paying more attention to the beauties nearer at hand than to the flowers at his feet.

Into all lives with any pretence to completeness there has, once at least, come a sudden change—a complete pause, and then a change.

This epoch has a great many names—perhaps each man would name it differently ; but the test is this, that the transitory something is endowed with such power that for ever after its visit life will be different from what it was before the advent.

Some men would call this power “Light” ; some “Wisdom,” and some “Law.” Women might call it “Faith,” and one of its names is “LOVE.”

One seer in a familiar book calls it “the open door.” “I saw an open door,” he says. And though of course the door was shut again, we know that the darkness that followed was not as the darkness that preceded the vision.

This portal opens in homely and unexpected places, too, sometimes ; it is like the tale of the child playing in the wood near home, who found a door in a tree and a flight of steps leading straight down into fairyland, and through fairyland the road led back again to the fields behind his own little cottage.

Gretchen has suddenly discovered that the gates of Paradise were hidden behind Dame Martha's almond trees, and, seeing them open, she has passed in, Faust following, and before long they are wandering up and down one of the bypaths of Heaven, blissfully occupied with each other, and completely unconscious of the rest of the universe. Their little personalities are still pacing up and down the gravel, weed-strewn walks of a little

German garden, but their two real selves are away on another plane of existence, where being does not exist in patches, but is one and indivisible, and where consciousness is only another name for joy !

They talk to each other in snatches, but their eyes say more. We hear her as they pass describing her home life ; but they are not thinking of what their lips are saying.

She is still half afraid of this great happiness ; hardly dares to think that she is not still dreaming. Falteringly asks him how he can admire one so untutored and so homely, to which he replies with a lover's logic that she is an angel ! And this argument seems to him quite sufficient and convincing.

He kisses her hand, and she draws it away with a sudden shame that he should caress anything so rough, and apologises for its coarseness caused by household duties : "Mother is so exacting, and I am ever at work."

He replies with lover's compliments ; but doubt still troubles her. What does this fine gentleman see in her to admire ? Is perhaps laughing at her all the while behind the screen of such perfect manners. (Her heaven is troubled by cold winds that come sweeping up from earth.)

"Courtesy comes to you by habit," she says shrewdly a little later, in answer to his asseveration that he can never, never forget so charming an evening, or such a companion. "But out of sight, I may be out of mind. You must have many friends of greater wisdom and more worth than I."

He replies with a smile : "What is called wisdom, dearest, believe me, is often nothing more than vanity—blindness and vanity !"

Few know this better than he does ; but the remark is beyond her, and she looks at him with a puzzled expression that is very touching.

He returns the glance tenderly and says, half to himself :



"Strange how innocence and simplicity should never know their own transcendent worth ; that nature's highest gifts, humility and——"

Marguerite suddenly interrupts him. She cannot follow these abstract trains of thought, and her mind has gone back to his vow of eternal remembrance.

"Well, think of me then, even for a moment. I shall have time enough to think of you!" she adds, with a sudden intuition that so beautiful a dream cannot be long-lived.

This time it is Faust who does not follow, for he replies :  
"Then you are much alone."

"Yes. There is a very great deal to do ; for though our house is small, it wants a lot of looking after. We keep no maid, and I have to cook and sew and knit and run about from early morning until night ; and then mother is so *dreadfully* particular. We really need not live as closely as we do ; my father left a little fortune—and yet I very seldom get an hour's leisure. My brother is a soldier, and my little sister died. I loved her and worked most willingly for her, she was so sweet."

"She was an angel if like you," murmurs Faust.

"You see, I brought her up myself. She came just after father's death, and mother was so ill."

"It must have been the purest joy," says Faust, with a vision of his blue-eyed Madonna carrying about a cooing little baby in her arms.

Gretchen's recollections are more practical. She loved to do it ; but the bringing up of an infant is not always a picturesque occupation ; it means many wakeful nights, and a daily round of important and uninteresting small duties.

She tries to explain this to her lover, and he listens and watches the grave, childish face for a while, and then leads the conversation back to herself, and gets her to talk of their first meeting, and asks if she recognised him when he entered an hour ago. (An hour ; it seems a century.)

Then he presses her to say whether she has forgiven him for accosting her outside the church, to which she answers that it was only herself that she blamed.

"It never happened before," she says, part of her shyness coming back to her, as she has to talk about herself. "I said, what have I done? How have I looked, that he should think that was the way to treat me? I was too angry with myself to be much angrier with you."

"Darling!" murmurs Faust.

As they walk on she suddenly stoops down and picks one of the daisies growing at the edge of the path, and begins to pull off the petals of the flower one by one, repeating something to herself in a whisper.

Faust watches her and admires the natural, unstudied grace of all her movements. "What is that for—a daisy-chain?"

"No, it's a game," she answers shyly, and goes on counting the petals.

"What are you saying to yourself?"

"You would laugh at me!" and yet she counts louder, so that he may hear.

"He loves me—loves me not—loves me not—loves me"; and each time a petal is pulled off and thrown down, till the daisy has lost half its crown.

"You vision of heavenly beauty!" says Faust to himself.

"He loves me—loves me not—he loves me—loves me not—LOVES ME!" It is the last petal, and she gives a little glad cry, and Faust stretches out his arms and says tenderly: "Indeed, my child, he loves thee—loves thee."

. . . . .

Time flies unheeded after this. Twilight deepens into dusk, and dusk is changing into night, when finally the prudent Mephisto thinks that the hour for parting has come.

He has been keeping Dame Martha amused and out of the way, and the evening has been longer for him than for

the others. He goes off in search of his *protégé*, Dame Martha with him ; and though the two lovers have not told each other the millionth part of all that they have to say, the elders separate them, and Gretchen is sent home to her mother, while the Devil takes Faust off in another direction.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LONELY HILLS

FROM the personal to the impersonal ; from the individual to the universal ! From the warm, flower-strewn garden, to the cold, bare hills ! From love, with her myrtle wreath, to wisdom, the star-crowned !

“Man’s love is of man’s life a part.” A part only ; and no man knew this better than Goethe, or taught it more eloquently. Gretchen’s story is but the end of this sentence, “writ large in human life.”

Faust has left Marguerite, and has gone away to the hills ; partly, perhaps, foreseeing that to continue in the path he was treading would spell ruin for his companion ; partly also because her hold upon him is imperfect, and, once out of her presence, his mind still turns to other things.

The first part of the Gretchen interlude is like snatches of fairy music which interrupt a wise man’s meditations, charming him, touching him perhaps a *great* deal, but not penetrating to the core of his existence. Just now the elfin bells are not ringing, and the old philosopher wearing the young body has gone back mentally to the beginning of the story—to that Easter night—and has taken up his train of thought just where it was broken off by Wagner’s entrance, with all that has happened between forgotten almost as if it had never been.

Love, and the love of life, have sunk back into secondary positions, and the old yearning for wisdom has come again

with renewed force. We can imagine Faust repeating the lines that occur before the advent of the earth-spirit—

“Where shall I find thee—thee thyself, eternal nature? Where seek those breasts on which all heaven and all earth are hanging and are satisfied, while I am here a-hungered and a-thirst?”

The hunger and the thirst have renewed themselves with redoubled force as the first effects of the love-potion have worn off, and Faust has turned with a sudden loathing from the company of merrymakers of different sorts with whom Mephisto still seeks to surround him, and has demanded to be taken away—far away—into one of the world's wild and solitary places.

The Devil has obeyed perforce, but with reluctance. He has transported the philosopher to a wild mountain range (half a continent, away from the smiling meadows of his native town), and has chosen a large cavern in which the thinker can take shelter during the frequent storms that rage round the heights. He comes now and then to see Faust, bringing him food and other necessities of life, and seasons his visit with honeyed sneers; but, once out of sight, Faust forgets his existence and turns again to his life of thought.

In the beginning Faust uses his cavern as he used his cell, takes it as a secluded place where he can brood, and he barricades himself from the outer world with rocks, as erstwhile with books and book-shelves; but a new factor has entered into his life, and the darkness amid which he now lives is not as the darkness that went before. He has forgotten Gretchen completely for the while; but his short sojourn on the other side of that open door has not been without results, for dimly he feels now that isolation spells unconsciousness, and dimly he remembers that where life was fullest, there were no barriers.

His mind still goes back to that eventful Easter eve, but this time, instead of dwelling upon his disappointment and shame, memory leads him back to an almost forgotten

incident, to those few moments when an unseen influence seemed to speak through him, and he wonders now whether his trance-speech was a message from that One who came after.

How did the words run?

"And dost thou ask why the dull ache will not depart, by which thy life-pulse is oppressed? Instead of living in nature's sphere, created for mankind of old, another world surrounds thee here."

INSTEAD OF LIVING IN NATURE'S SPHERE! The words strike him with a new power.

Instead of living in nature's sphere! No, he has never lived in nature's sphere. The peasant dwells in that sphere, never in any other—hence his brutish stupidity. The wise man dwells among learned men, learned books, among the maxims of the ancients, and so on—hence his wisdom. Then memory reminds him suddenly of his late definition of such wisdom: "Vanity and blindness, blindness and vanity!"

We must erase half a dozen centuries from our consciousness before we shall be able to understand and thoroughly enter into Faust's struggles, and appreciate the terrible and real nature of the conflict going on within him. The difference between mysticism and atheism is not more great, and the gulf between its opposing disciples not wider, than the abyss which yawns between the follower of tradition and insight, and the follower of experiment; and to drive a mind accustomed to view truth from one point to go and look at it from the other, seems a well-nigh impossible task.

So, in the beginning, though instinct has brought him to one of the grandest spots on earth, Faust uses his cavern as he used his cell, as a place to brood in, and there is only one good thing in the change—*there are no books!*

It is this omission perhaps which begins to work the change. Time hangs a little heavily in the self-chosen solitude, and the great volume of Nostradamus is not there

to wile away the hours; and after a while Faust has a vague longing for companionship of some sort, missing his dusty manuscript friends more than he expected.

As books are not obtainable, Faust begins to look for other solace; *and thus it is that by degrees, and quite unconsciously, he is drawn to touch the folds of that life-garment of Deity—NATURE!* creative wisdom in manifestation!

At first the man does little more than stand at the door of his cavern and idly watch the living things that are near him; but they *are* living, and exercise that attraction that life has for life, which all but the lowest must feel.

He gets to know the birds, and to get up and wait to hear the dawn-song with which they greet the sun. He begins to linger near the banks of the torrents, and to ponder on that deep note that ever resounds in their depths, and to follow some of the overtones, notably the melodious fifth, which, unlike the deep keynote, comes and goes with the breathing of the water. He follows the torrent back to its source, and hears the laughing treble of its babyhood, where the white water is leaping among the tiny, rounded stones.

The bushes begin to show signs of green (spring is late in the hills), and Faust stops to watch the swelling buds, and to remark how sunshine and shower bring beauty out of barrenness.

After a few days, the chestnuts on the lower slopes begin to spread out tiny green hands under the influence of the vernal sun, and the philosopher, who used to view such things as a background against which humanity was meant to pose, as an adjunct to man and specially meant for his use—the philosopher turns into the disciple, a wondering disciple, learning strange things from these myriad unfolding lives. Watches them and is willing to be taught by them; begins to wonder whether such things may not have their own special purpose, apart from any use they may be to Adam's seed.

Long are these days upon the hills, each of them equal to years in what they contain ; and great is the reward of this new disciple for having taken the spirit of a little child ; for the earth-angel that he summoned by magic, and who came in wrath and contempt, but, as it seemed, to curse him, now stands unseen behind him for many days, directing his steps, and in the end reveals himself as teacher and familiar friend.

Who shall describe in writing or in words those lessons on the hills, for much teaching there is that is given in the sunlight or under the stars ; but the Great One, in teaching, never speaks. He will but point and smile, and the disciple must go and observe for himself.

Faust understands the method at length, and lets theory and other people's ideas go by the way, and proceeds to follow it out. Observes instead of speculating ; watches instead of dogmatising ; listens instead of talking ; and comes at length to understand some of those laws of nature which are the very thoughts of God.

The chief thing insisted upon is the *recognition of* UNITY—unity underlying diversity. Then, after that, the kinship and interdependence of things which is the outcome and result of this.

"Thou caused to pass before me all types of living things whispering, These are thy brothers," Faust says later, when speaking of his experiences with the earth-angel. And again : "Showed me my brethren in streams and seas, in woods and forests, and in the viewless and surrounding air."

And this time it is not a question of the supernatural, but of the purely natural ; not of sylphs and salamanders, but of the living creatures, visible and invisible, which surround us on all sides, and are kin to us in more or less degree.

CONTINUITY is another of the truths of which Faust is reminded. He is already aware that it is a natural sequence of underlying unity ; but now nature shows him the practical working of the law, as in "scarpéd cliff and



quarried stone " past forms come before his physical vision—strange, clumsy bodies which life inhabited in past ages ; uncouth, unwieldy shapes, bearing little or no exterior resemblance to aught that exists now, but still links in the unbroken chain—of which the silent voice still whispers, These are thy brethren."

KINSHIP is perhaps the lesson most insisted upon—*the lesson of brotherhood* ! It is repeated again and again, perhaps because, of all familiar truths, it is the one which Faust has most ignored in practice. . He is now made to *realise* the interdependence of life in every rank, on every scale, till what had been a mere intellectual conception, a colourless hypothesis, becomes a glowing sentiment, a living emotion. Till he feels the world, the universe even, to be composed of members of one great family, all of which are related to him ; till, finally, his sympathies extend from his elder brethren, the shining ones, down to his younger brethren, the stones ; seeing that development is only a matter of age.

We feel, as we listen to his spoken thoughts, that a very great deal of his desire has been fulfilled, a great part of his yearning satisfied, and that he has indeed stood very close to the "busy spirit that o'ersweeps the world" ; has stood and watched

". . . The constant weaving,  
With change still rife,  
The restless heaving,  
The glowing life,"

and that, too, from a vantage ground which has enabled him to view as a whole, and to partially understand, the complex patterns being woven into the seamless life-garment of Deity—nature, that flexible robe that half hides, half reveals the shrouded God.

. . . . .

We might think that Faust had now touched the apex of life ; we almost pause to hear him pronounce the fatal

words to the passing moment : "Stay, thou art perfect" ; and yet in so doing not to forfeit his salvation, for the beauty and the joy are not the outcome of means which the Devil has at his command, and Faust's life on the hills is in opposition to his wishes.

But, for one thing, nature is at the best only the garment, not the God ; and, for another, Faust's pleasure has a central core of sorrow and shame.

We have (alas !) two selves, as he said to Wagner, and when the better self is nearest to the gods, on the hill-tops and ready to soar away into the blue, borne aloft by strong wings, the second self is still on all fours on the plains below.

So the greater the height, the deeper the valley will be ; for every action, mechanical or spiritual, has its consequent and equivalent reaction, and for as long as Faust leaves his second self to grovel, he will be drawn down to grovel with it, at periodic intervals.

The first twenty lines or so of Scene 13 are an outline of the story of Faust's life among the hills and his intercourse with the earth-angel, the spirit of nature ; but the beautiful monologue ends abruptly, as the speaker's attention is attracted by a gleam of scarlet among the distant trees. He stands for a moment watching, his expression changing to one of loathing, almost of fear, and when he speaks again, it is in a totally different tone, as he mutters—

"Perfection is indeed not within reach of man. Thou gavest me an insight that brought me to the threshold of the Deity, and with it linked this comrade who, with his cold and withering breath, turns all thy gifts to shadows."

There are some people who have this gift to perfection, people whose mere presence is sufficient to make faith seem credulity ; purity, folly ; learning, waste of time ; and whose smile has the effect of causing us to see the distorted features of hallucination reflected in the beautiful face of inspiration. But this change should not dismay us ; these

are only the masks which the shining ones hold before them, when they are in the presence of the unfit or the unclean.

Meanwhile Mephisto has made his way out of the forest, and comes jauntily up the mountain path, greeting Faust with the usual suave smile as he comes close to. "Well! art nearly wearied of this kind of life?" he inquires cheerfully.

"Would to heaven thou hadst sufficient occupation to keep thee busied far from here!" retorts Faust fiercely.

The Devil gives a little light laugh, and lays down the food he has brought with him in a little niche in the rocks, where it will be secure from rain or sun. "All day we toil to work his lordship's pleasure, and this is the way he thanks us."

"Brings me naught but weariness, and would be thanked for it," retorts Faust ungraciously.

Mephisto looks at him with a certain pity. "Poor mortal!" he says quietly. "How hadst thou fared without me? Who cured thee of the morbid thoughts that threatened thy destruction? And even now, but for my care, thou wouldst not trouble earth for long."

Looking out over the mountain and valleys that stretch as far as eye can reach, untouched by any sign of human life, Faust can hardly deny his dependence, though the recollection of it may gall him.

The Devil breaks the silence again with a repetition of his first inquiry. He is desirous of knowing, he says politely, how much longer the learned Doctor intends to continue this life of a toad in a hole.

The simile is an annoying one, and rouses Faust to quick anger. "Didst know the superhuman joys of such a life, thou wert quite fiend enough to grudge me such enjoyment."

"Such enjoyment!" retorts the other; "to lie out in the dew on chilly nights among the hills, with swelling soul drinking in all creation. Nay, I do not grudge thee all

the joy that springs from such hallucinations ; these moods but bring a more intense reaction towards other things. Enough of this ! Thy love sits still at home and grieves for thee, and if so great a man could condescend to leave the heights and to reward her somewhat for such love and constancy, the hours would pass more quickly for her. At present she sits and sighs, and sings, 'Oh, for the wings of a dove,' and sighs again."

"Tempter !" cries Faust. "Away ! nor seek to stir a smouldering fire."

"Oh, then she's right. She thought herself forsaken."

"Forsaken ! She is *not* forgotten or forsaken ! I am still near her, with her ; were I a world away, I could not lose her or forget her. Go hence, Pander !"

"Rail on, my friend," says the Devil quietly. "The power that fashioned man and maid drives the same business. Only methought thy dear love's arms a better goal than death."

Faust glances up at him quickly, with the same fleeting expression of fear. Why this linking of love with death ?

The man is beginning to realise the tremendous power hidden behind the smiling face and smooth manner, and at times to feel that the doom he laughed at and braved may be perchance fated to overwhelm him. And now comes a new dread, a terror lest Gretchen's ruin be linked to his, may also be destined and inevitable ; that he, the outcast and accurst, will wreck her life like an avalanche sweeping down the mountain side and destroying all it touches, carrying with it too the little sheltered cottage that lies in its path, down to the general destruction in the abyss below.

He begins to rave in an agony of misery and apprehension, and hurl abuse at the smiling Fiend, whose unmoved countenance and smiling answers but stimulate his frenzy ; and at last, when the scene ends, it is with his bitter prayer to the powers of Hell that, if the doom must fall, it shall fall quickly.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE RETURN

*Scene 14.*—There is an Andante Spinato by Chopin, a prelude to one of his brilliant Polonaises, and as it begins we at once hear the soft rhythmic whir-rr, rr-rr-rr of the spinning wheel. It seems to be all rhythm for a while, till we gradually become aware that a sad, persistent little melody is being woven in with the threads, a plaintive little song that keeps time with the whirring of the wheel; and in it we recognise the haunting thoughts of the girl who sits spinning.

Suddenly the wheel stops, and a new phase of the little song goes on unaccompanied, simple, plaintive, persistent, only two or three notes repeated again and again, and finally the passage ends with a little sharp catch that is almost like a sob.

Then the busy wheel starts again, and once more the little sad song keeps time to the rhythmic hum.

This Andante is the musical equivalent to the next scene; Gretchen is the girl who sits spinning, and the burden of her song is, "nevermore!"

She sings softly to herself as the wheel goes round.

"My peace is broken,  
My heart is sore;  
I shall see him never—  
Ah, nevermore!

For him I watch  
As abroad I roam;  
To seek him only  
I leave my home.

My peace is broken,  
My heart is sore ;  
I shall see him never—  
Ah, nevermore ! " (A. S.)

And then the weary wheel begins again, and its rhythm keeps time to the song, and echoes " Nevermore, never, nevermore ! "

. . . . .

However, the prophecy of the spinning wheel is not yet to be fulfilled (not ever to be entirely fulfilled indeed), for the next Scene (15) is once again Dame Martha's garden, and the two lovers are walking up and down its paths together.

The year has gone on since their last meeting. The pink fruit-blossoms have faded and fallen; the trees have passed into the stage of serious work, during which all natural things are quiet and unobtrusive; and it is the lilacs who are making their *début* at present, and are attracting the passers-by with their beauty and their freshness.

The lilacs have it all their own way (for the rest of the flowers are not quite ready), and they are filling the air with their heavy, penetrating scent, and have such a wealth of blossom that the whole garden seems to be in a kind of half mourning, purple and white—mourning for who knows what? Perhaps for the sadness that lies behind all sweetness.

The subtle scent of these lilacs steals unperceived into the senses of those present, so that in future days a passing waft of their perfume will be to the man like a scorching breath from a furnace of agony and shame.

Faust and Gretchen are alone in the garden this time; the reconciliation has taken place when we come upon the scene, and she is standing opposite to him, holding both his hands, and saying earnestly—

" Promise me ! Promise me ! "

We are left to guess what it is that he promises so fervently ; but from the way in which his answer contents her, we may be almost sure that the demand was that he should never, never—no, no matter *what* happens, never leave her like that again.

He promises, and her face lightens ; she slips her arm into his, and they begin pacing up and down the path again.

Another matter has been troubling her, however, and with a feeling perhaps that it will be better to have all the unpleasant things over at once, she passes on directly to the dangerous subject, and begins questioning her lover as to his religious beliefs. He evades ; but she persists.

And at last he answers gently : "Leave these unquestioned, child. Content thyself that I would give my life for thee, so much I love thee. As for thy faith, I would not rob thee, or any other soul, of his belief."

"'Tis not enough ; *all* of us must believe."

"Must we?"

A silence creeps between them, and unconsciously she loosens her hold upon his arm, and again stands still, looking across the garden with a troubled face to where the cathedral towers up against the sky.

All her knowledge of God, all her experience of good and evil, are interwoven with Church tradition and Church dogma ; so that the many threads seem to her to form but one substance and to be inseparable. She *cannot* disassociate aught of good from religion, neither art, learning, nor ethics ; and to her a man who rejects the Catholic faith, necessarily rejects God and all His goodness.

All those who are outside the Church are outcasts, sinners, vile reprobates, incapable of any virtue, and doomed to eternal damnation. She has been taught this and has believed this from childhood, and now, for the first time, she has come into contact with one whose goodness and love for her she cannot deny, and of whose faith she more than doubts. She is face to face with a fact she cannot ignore, and one which her Church does not satisfactorily explain.

Faust stands and watches her troubled face, powerless to console, though fully understanding the phase through which she is passing, having indeed struggled through a similar one himself during that part of his life when the years were spent in unlearning nearly all that he had been taught and had, until then, blindly accepted. They were bitter years, those that were occupied with clearing away all the treasured rubbish, all the pretty tangled undergrowth that hid the soil of his mind, so as to leave a bare unsightly spot, but one open to light and air and free for building upon.

Now he does not grudge his labour or his sorrow ; but Gretchen's sorrow may be unavailing ! In her case things are different, for *she has taken the rubbish handed down to her and has used it for building* ; has left the picturesque brambles to climb up and cover over the house walls, and the wild undergrowth to spread in her garden, and only by the ruin of the whole structure could you take away that which was useless or harmful from that which was good.

Thus Faust can only stand on one side and watch, and counsel her to keep to love, and let the rest go by.

This, however, is just what she will *not* do ; and from her point of view her persistence is natural, seeing that she believes that there is only one path leading to salvation.

In a moment she breaks out with a cry : " Ah ! if I could only influence thee ! Thou dost not revere even the sacraments, then ? "

" Nay, I revere them. "

" Without the wish to be partaker of them ? Dost thou believe in God ? "

" My darling, who shall assert thus glibly, I believe in God, " he says ; " such a reply from human lips seems but to mock the questioner. "

The shibboleth of the Church, the easy give and take of the holy name, the labelling and defining of the unfathomable, seems to him such blasphemy. He has lately lived in one of the outermost courts of the temple of the Supreme,



but even at that distance he has realised that any attempt to approach some things by words is but ignorance or profanity. Never again will he give Mephisto cause to smile at him for his accurate definitions of the unseen. He shrinks even from Gretchen's unconscious roughness in her handling of sacred things. While to her his reticence seems but a proof of atheism.

She draws a long, shuddering breath. "Then thou dost not even believe in God!" She whispers it, as though, were she to speak aloud, the ground would open at their feet and disclose the abyss of Hell ready to engulf such a sinner.

"Nay, sweetheart, do not mistake me," he answers quickly, and then hesitates and casts about in his mind for some form of words that will partially explain his thoughts to her—some picture of the "power" in which he more than believes, which she will understand.

His effort is without result, and as she stands there waiting, looking at him with those troubled blue eyes, he gives a gesture of despair.

He will not gloss over the circumstance with an easy lie, cannot bring himself to cheat her with a shallow truism.

He looks away, and when he begins speaking, it is half to himself—

"Who shall affirm, saying I believe; yea, who shall dare to name Him? Who shall disclaim, faltering, I believe Him not. He, the All-sustainer; He, the All-enfolding—doth He not fold, sustain, uphold thee, me, Himself? Is not the arch of heaven secure; the earth a platform firm beneath our feet? Do not the friendly stars above follow a fixed, eternal path——?" (A. S.)

Faust breaks off, becoming aware that Gretchen is not in the least understanding again, and that her eyes have filled with tears. Turning round, he takes both her hands in his and drops into a more homely vein.

Without either being aware of it, she is teaching him how to explain, for literally in her eyes he reads the words that seem to come from his own brain.

"Sweetheart, as I thus gaze deep into thine eyes, lo! all the eternal mysteries are thronging round thee, visible to those that have the sight to see them. They whisper in thy brain and touch thy heart. Fill now thy heart with this that surges round thee, and when thy bliss has reached its utmost limit, call the emotion joy, love, or God—what thou wilt! I have no name for it; *feeling* is everything; name seems to me but like the smoke that dims the brightness of the flame."

We have, alas! in English, but a couple of loosely-used shallow words—emotion, sensation—to express "*Gefühl*" as it is meant here. Those, however, familiar with Eastern religions, will recognise at once that Faust is not alluding to "*feeling*" on any of the lower planes, but to expression in the realms above, to life in the fourth state of consciousness—to what perhaps we could very roughly term "*spiritual instinct*," of which every human being possesses a fragment.<sup>1</sup>

On the spiritual and physical planes all human beings may meet (the intellectual plane is apt to be the plane of separation), so that one touch of God, like one touch of nature, makes us suddenly "*all a-kin*." Thus Gretchen responds at once to this appeal. On this highest plane she understands him, is perhaps even more than his equal; and she answers him by a loving pressure of the hand.

"What thou sayest is just what the priest has taught me—only in slightly different language," she adds truthfully.

<sup>1</sup> It is in the same sense as the above, I fancy, that the word "*feeling*" is used in "*The Varieties of Religious Experience*," by W. James, LL.D., *Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion*, 1901-1902.

"I do believe that feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue; but all such statements are misleading from their brevity, and it will take the whole hour for me to explain to you exactly what I mean."

This to a hall full of students. Faust probably knew that it would take a lifetime, or a life's experience, to make Gretchen understand.

"All creation tells the same tale, each one in his different language; so why not I in mine, dearest?"

But Gretchen's moment of clairvoyance has already passed, and training, coming to the front again, begins to distort her vision.

"It sounds all right," she admits reluctantly; "yet I'm afraid there's something wrong, because thou'rt not a Christian."

Faust sighs, and attempts to silence her by a caress; but when the love-passage is over she returns again to the subject from another aspect. Nothing so obstinate as a gentle, yielding nature when possessed of a fixed idea.

This time her words are in outspoken disapproval of Faust's companion. Womanlike, she wishes to attribute the defects in her idol to outward causes (to anything but internal flaw), and in this case she has not far to go for a scapegoat, and by instinct has long ago recognised that Mephisto's influence over her lover is by no means one for good. Perhaps it is his sneers and evil counsel which are the barrier between Faust and the true Church.

But in answer to her lover's questions as to why she dislikes his comrade, she can only reply by the feminine reason that she dislikes him because she hates him.

"You need not fear him, child."

"He makes me shudder. I was always good friends with everyone before; but this man fills me with repulsion. I'm sure that he's a villain. May God forgive me if I do him wrong!"

"It takes all sorts to make a world," says Faust easily.

"Ah! but we need not live with such as those. He sneers at everything; one sees there's none in the world he loves. I feel so free, so happy, in thy arms; and when he comes, 'tis almost as if I could not love thee any more."

"What great forebodings!" says Faust playfully.

"No! no! it is so; and when he's there one cannot pray. Hast thou not felt the same?"

"This is pure prejudice," says Faust roughly, shaking

himself free from her caressing arms, more moved than he cares to own. Then he silences her protest again with kisses.

She clings to him passionately, almost sobbing, and over their heads the cathedral bells ring out the hour.

She starts on realising how late it is, and whispers: "I must go."

"So soon?" says her lover impatiently. "And am I never to have thee to myself, alone, but for one hour—heart to heart?"

He persuades; she retreats; till at last she answers tenderly: "True, I have given thee so much, 'twere but a little more to give thee all. To-night?—but there's my mother in the house; she sleeps so lightly. Were she to wake and find thee there 'twould kill me!"

Faust takes a half-empty phial out of his pocket, which we recognise as that poison he so nearly drank on Easter night. It does not speak much for his peace of mind that he should carry this about with him.

"Take this. Put but three drops in aught thy mother drinks at night. She will not wake."

"It will not do her any harm?"

"If so, should I have given it to thee?"

They then part hurriedly, murmuring "To-night."

We are sure, both from the knowledge of his character and from what happens afterwards, that Faust has acted in good faith; but has he forgotten that what may cause no more than sleep a little heavier than usual in a strong man, may prove a fatal dose for a weak, ailing woman—may change the long sleep into the trance of death?

Or, when Marguerite is measuring the poison, is Mephisto, unseen at her elbow, causing her to miscalculate or forget, or whispering to her fears that a little more will do no harm, and bidding her make sure that the sleep is heavy?

Gretchen is hardly out of sight when Mephisto steps

from behind one of the bushes and begins to chaff Faust gently about the recent conversation.

The lover is furious at having been spied upon, but the Devil pays scant attention to the storm that he has roused, though Faust looks in a dangerous mood, and hardly a man to be trifled with.

There is an indefinable change creeping over Mephisto's manner, and he is treating Faust now as a cat might treat a mouse of whose escape there is no chance, as she lets the captive run away a little and imagine itself free, and then springs upon it again; and the Devil seems to take a positive pleasure in lashing Faust into a frenzy, and then making him feel his powerlessness to resent or revenge insult.

"They always like their lovers to be followers of the Church," he remarks. "They think that sort more likely to be tame at home."

"Thou monster, dost thou not see the pure, sweet soul is only grieved because her lover, not believing what she deems the only faith, is thus condemned to everlasting fire?"

Mephisto gives an incredulous shrug of his shoulders. "However, I'll admit she has some knowledge of physiognomy; my presence even makes her feel—she knows not what! She almost smells the Devil. Well, then, it's for to-night?"

"What's that to thee?"

"Oh, I have got my share in this amusement," replies Mephisto meaningly, as he turns upon his heel and goes down the path, leaving Faust to stand alone in the deserted garden filled with unquiet thoughts.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SHADOW TOUCHES MARGUERITE<sup>1</sup>

*Scene 16.*—Four days have elapsed since the last scene, and April is nearly over—four days that have been to Gretchen like four eternal epochs of misery.

First there was love's dream, a night of love, ending with vows to meet again, when the dawn warned them to separate. Then the return to familiar household tasks, early duties always performed while the invalid mother still slept; and on this morning she slept as usual while Gretchen moved lightly about the rooms below doing her usual tasks mechanically with absent thoughts and dreamy eyes.

Then a little anxiety as there were no footsteps overhead at the usual hour; and when another hour passed, a creeping fear lest the dose should have been too strong, and that this long, quiet sleep may do harm afterwards.

Then another hour, and another, till the sun is high in the heavens, and the house is still silent.

Then, as the neighbours are preparing the mid-day meal, a terrible cry that rings out on the quiet noontide, and brings a small crowd running up to the silent house to see who it is that is in mortal anguish.

The neighbours take the girl away from the chamber of

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is not in the play, and is merely inserted as a link in the story.

death, where they find her huddled up in a corner, and stricken dumb with terror ; and after that it seems to Gretchen as if the house is always full—full of a restless, curious crowd, who question her and talk to her, press wine and food upon her ; and she imagines that they are really demons clothed in human bodies who have come to increase her unendurable torture.

She shrinks away from the would-be helpers and sympathisers with such strange looks, that at last they leave her pityingly alone, doing all the necessary offices for the dead as quietly as possible, and only troubling the distraught and stricken girl when it is absolutely necessary.

There is little or no surprise at the suddenness of the death, for all know that the invalid's life has long hung by a single thread, and it seems most natural that she should have passed away peacefully during sleep. And the surprise excited by Gretchen's refusal to help or even to touch the dead, or to bid the silent form good-bye before it is taken away, dies down into pity as Dame Martha and another old family friend hint that strange behaviour has been known before in that family, and warn people to leave the overwrought girl alone.

When the priest comes there is a long whispered consultation, for the dead was one of the favourite daughters of the Church, but the difficulty is that she died unshriven, and this consultation, and the compromise, Dame Martha also keeps away from Gretchen's knowledge.

In many ways the old woman comes between her and the curious, well-meaning crowd ; protects the girl from questions, defends her from intrusion, and even carries her point with the priest that Gretchen shall be left alone for a while by a process that somewhat resembles bribery.

Strangest of all, the old gossip asks no questions herself, though Gretchen speaks to her when she will answer no one else ; it seems almost as if Dame Martha half guessed many things and did not wish to know how near her guesses ran to the truth.

At length, after four interminable days and nights, the crowd ceases to stream through the house, the hubbub subsides, and Gretchen is left alone once more. Solitude has been her one request, and Dame Martha has again overruled the kindly offers of companionship, and has got the neighbours to grant the girl her wish, promising that she will run over constantly to see if anything is needed.

Then for hours Gretchen sits in a kind of stupor, and Dame Martha leaves her to herself, without attention and without food, trusting that the animal instincts will assert themselves and rouse her; and in the end this is what happens.

Hunger will no longer be denied. Gretchen gets up from her cramped position on the floor by the bedside, and goes downstairs in search of food, and, having eaten, she sets to work mechanically to sweep away the crumbs and clean the china she has used. One thing leads to another; the house is untidy, the floors are soiled with many footmarks, and in the same absent way she begins to sweep and to scrub and to dust, going indifferently into all the rooms, strewing fresh sand on the boards in the chamber of death, with the same unbroken apathy with which she is performing the other tasks.

Finally, when the place has regained its former spotlessness, she finds there is no more water in the house, and, taking up one of the large earthenware jars, she opens the door and goes out into the street towards the fountain—Dame Martha watching her from behind her window-curtains.

As Gretchen passes down the street, some people pause and seem to wish to speak to her, while others whisper and cross over to avoid a meeting. Two men stop and watch her out of sight, and as they go on again, one mentions Faust's name, and his companion shakes his head, as if unwilling to continue the theme.

Gretchen goes on with set face and vacant eyes, conscious neither of friendly overtures nor of criticism, nor of the



rumour which is steadily gaining ground that a lover was seen to leave the house on the night of her mother's death, and has been lingering round the place once or twice since.

In truth, Faust, knowing nothing of the sorrow which has befallen his beloved, cannot understand her silence, and has been haunting the street at dusk in the hopes of seeing her at the window.

In so small a town this does not pass unnoticed, and the story of the meeting in Dame Martha's garden somehow gets known, and this, too, goes against her. Still, though a few think the worse of Gretchen, many are unwilling to believe the rumour, and many are ignorant of it ; so that, as she passes up the street, there are kindly, pitying glances after her, and many a sympathetic wish.

The nearest fountain to her house is the one which stands in the central square of the town, and as one of the chief duties of girls of her class is to keep the house supplied with water, the fountain is a great meeting place and gossiping place for the girls of all the neighbouring streets. Two or three of them are chattering and laughing there as Marguerite comes into sight ; but their talk is hushed as she draws near, and one by one they slip away, awed by her strange aspect. The girl whose jar is then filling cannot thus make her escape, but has to stay and brave it out, and as Gretchen stands patiently waiting her turn, she begins in a clumsy way to try and make conversation, to pass the time.

"Hast heard the news?" she says loudly, as if speaking to a deaf person.

"The news?" replies Gretchen absently. "No, I seldom go from home."

Poor Lieschen feels that she has stumbled sadly in her first attempt. True, Gretchen has had reason for staying at home lately ; but it is also her habit to keep herself more or less aloof from others—a habit that has helped to make her unpopular. However, Lieschen is not going to rake

up old troubles at present, and she covers up her mistake, and goes on quickly in a conversational tone—

"Well, 'twas Sybilla told me. The haughty Barbara's tripped at last."

"Tripped?"

"Oh yes, it's visible enough; she feeds another beside herself now when she eats and drinks."

"Poor soul! Poor soul!"

Lieschen is indignant. "She's only got her due: what's there to pity? When we were kept at home spinning beside our mother's side, the whole dull evening through, she spent the hours with her lover in shady walks. And every place she went to, she must be always first, be treated then to wine and pastries, taken to fairs and dances, courted and caressed—it made one sick! She's had her turn, and now will have to come in the white robe of penitence down to the church door on her knees, and kneel there and confess her sins."

"But he will marry her?" gasps Gretchen.

"Marry her!" retorts the other with coarse worldly wisdom—"a comely youth like that with all the world before him! Besides, he's gone away."

"That—that was wrong," gasps Gretchen in so agonised a tone that anyone less dense than Lieschen would have guessed the truth without further words. The rough girl, however, sees nothing except the fact that her jar has filled while she was chattering, and is now running over, so she arranges the pad on her head, and, dextrously swinging the heavy earthenware vessel up into its usual resting place, goes off arms akimbo down the steps, shouting over her shoulder to Gretchen: "It wouldn't have done her any good if she had got him; the boys would have torn her bridal wreath to bits, and we should have strewed chopped hay before the door. Good-bye."

Gretchen forgets to answer, and stands like one petrified, watching her out of sight. The careless words have opened a new vista of horror, and the sorrow which

has gone before seems feeble in comparison to the one that threatens.

*She has waked at last with a start to the realisation of what she has done, and to all the possible consequences of her action.*

It is the same sin, hers and Barbara's ! Until now she has never realised that it is the same sin. It was only wicked people with wicked thoughts who sinned like that, and, looking back, she can remember no wickedness but love—no wicked thoughts, but a fuller and more beautiful life, a greater realisation of God and His goodness, an awakening and ripening of all that was best in her ; and yet this has ended in nothing but the same stale sin, and she has waked from her dream of Paradise to find herself that unclean thing that she has sometimes seen from a distance and condemned and despised.

She, who has so prided herself upon her daintiness, has kept aloof from the neighbours' girls, repelled by their rough ways and coarse, careless speech, has fallen to be something below them, something they will point at and make mock of. She, who has read so much in the saints' lives about right and wrong, and has had so many lessons from the good priests, to have fallen and failed in her first duties, for want of a rude kind of mother-wit and coarse sense, which these rough girls possess.

What is the meaning of it ?

It is the old story of isolation bringing its own punishment. Inter-dependence is the law, and whoso breaketh that law shall surely suffer ; he who defies it shall die.

Had Gretchen lived more with her own kind, she might (perhaps inevitably would) have lost a great deal of her softness and charm ; but she would have gained in return that common-sense which is more than knowledge. At present right and wrong seem in a hopeless tangle, and there is no one to explain or help her. Like Faust, in a way, she has emancipated herself from the opinion of her neighbours without wisdom to replace the broken code by a better one.

Despairingly she asks herself why she sinned, and her heart answers rebelliously that love is no sin, and yet . . . None of her elders have explained the seeming contradiction to her, showing her that while the lower nature remains what it is, social laws are a necessity, and must have control over the very purest of our emotions. While that which she might have learnt by looking at the picture-book of life, she has missed by being too dainty to touch its soiled pages, so that, like many another, she has to *shatter* herself against the law before she realises its necessity.

She and Faust have kept aloof from the crowd, and in different ways are being whipped back to it, and her doom—poor soul!—is to be thrown in the mire at the feet of those whom she looked down upon.

As Gretchen stands at the fountain now with her empty pitcher, a sudden vision of her fate flashes across her consciousness.

"Gone away!" She sees herself deserted like poor Barbara, and the social abyss between herself and her lover forces itself upon her recognition. He, marry her! Why should he? Lieschen's words came back to her ears: "A comely youth like that, with all the world before him." But if not that, what else? The public confession, the public shame, the barefoot penitent kneeling on the church steps and all round her the mocking crowd—she sees it all, herself the central figure, and Lieschen standing in the front saying: "Well, it serves her right; she had her turn. Why pity her?" and with a cry Gretchen takes up the empty jug and hurries back into the shelter of her home.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SHADOW DEEPENS

ALL the next day Gretchen moves restlessly about the house, haunted by one persistent vision—a square, a crowded square, and a kneeling figure on the church steps. And when the kindly dusk falls at last, she steals out of the house with her hands full of flowers, and, keeping in the shadow, makes her way by side-streets until she reaches the city wall.

Still in the shadow, she creeps along until a small shrine is reached. It is merely a niche hollowed out in the thickness of the wall, and which contains a crude image of the Virgin ; but it is her goal. Here Gretchen stops, and, glancing round fearfully to be sure that she is unperceived, begins hurriedly putting the flowers into some jars which stand in front of the image. This done, she drops on her knees on the worn steps below, covers her face with her hands, and prays despairingly—prays to be delivered from the fate that is haunting her, to be saved from disgrace and death ; and then, as footsteps are heard, she shrinks into the shadow, and when the man has passed makes her way home again.

At the entrance to her own street Marguerite meets a soldier coming unsteadily down the road muttering to himself, and she hides again, and after this gains her home unobserved, not knowing that she has just passed her own brother.

Valentine has come back to his native place on hearing

the news of his mother's death, and has been met on the way by the rumour of his sister's disgrace ; and the double shock has gone far to unsettle his reason. Arrived at his own town, he will not cross the polluted threshold of his home, but paces furiously up and down the streets near, muttering wildly to himself, and scarcely aware of what he is saying or doing.

That his sister, whom he has always held up as a model, *his* sister should prove so frail !

That *he*, an honourable soldier, should be tainted and soiled by relationship with such a sinner !

That this awful horror should have come to him !

It is characteristic of the man that his first and chief thought is the stain on his own reputation. Of his sister's possible suffering he does not even seem to dream, and no idea of possible excuse or explanation for her conduct ever enters his mind. She has committed one of the worst offences in the Church's long catalogue of sins, and with unclean hands has soiled even his garment of righteousness ; and what excuse could there be for so dire a crime ?

Had someone suggested to Valentine that Gretchen's daily round was monotonous and wearisome for one so young ; that, while he was fulfilling all that was best in him, and enjoying an interesting career, she was living a cramped and joyless life and not fulfilling herself in any way, he would have answered in all sincerity that his sister had "a good home," and "what more can she want ?" A good home, a devout mother, and what more can a child want ?

Had you told him that childhood had long passed ; that Marguerite was a woman with a woman's needs, a woman's *besoin d'aimer*, and that this God-given impulse had been always starved, repressed, kept under, and given no outlet, till the "fall" was an event that might almost have been prophesied ; that the stern mother, the daily drudgery, and the absence of any future to look forward

to, were enough to drive most girls of her temperament into ways that were unwise, he would have prated to you about "unregulated emotion," and would have held up as an example to be copied a nature like his own, one that was self-sufficing, and could wait for a conventional moment to fall in love, and then love within conventional boundaries — a type of nature that is self-sufficing because it is self-filled with self-love, under the *nom de guerre* of self-respect.

In such natures as Valentine's, this self-respect is the only vulnerable point, and woe betide those who wound them through it! Gretchen has thus wounded him to the quick, stabbed him to the heart, and Valentine, the usually calm and self-controlled man, is at present in a mood of madness that is capable of doing anything.

As he paces up and down the street, there is a red mist before his eyes, a fire raging in his brain, and he staggers like one drunk, though he has not touched wine that day. As he rages up and down, stopping every now and then to utter fierce imprecations, Faust and Mephisto are not a couple of hundred yards away, and are, further, walking towards him. Faust is in one of his dark, evil moods, sore and hurt at not having seen his beloved again, and totally unconscious of all that has happened to her.

Mephisto, on the other hand, is in the highest of spirits, and thrumming away softly on a guitar which he has slung over his shoulders. The Devil has even laid away sneers and sarcasm for a while, and is full of bright thoughts and sparkling repartee. As they walk past the cathedral, he gaily proposes a raid on the sacristy some day to replenish their funds, and Faust does not appear to have much idea of the sacredness of treasure largely wrung from the helpless and the dying, and laughingly assents.

The Devil still keeps time to their footsteps with a soft thrum, thrum, thrum, as they go on again. "'Tis a foretaste of the Walpurgis joys stirring within me," he

says apologetically; "a touch of thievishness, a touch of wantonness! Only a whole day more to wait! May-night's indeed the time to feel what you are made for. Ho for the Witches' Sabbath! Here's the beloved's house; shall I give her a moral serenade?"

Perhaps Faust hopes it may bring Gretchen to the window, and the Devil gives him no time to think of what else it may do, for he begins strumming at once and sings—

"Oh Katrina, beware!  
Have a care, have a care!  
Nor linger near thy lover's door.  
As a maiden fair  
Thou wilt enter there,  
But come out as a maid no more.

Katrina fair,  
Have a care, have a care!  
It is too——"

(A. S.)

Out of the shadow rushes Valentine. "Have at you, seducers!" he cries wildly; "first your accursed instruments, and then yourselves!"

*Crash!* goes the long rapier through the guitar, and Mephisto springs to one side and calls to Faust for help as he disembarrasses himself of the broken instrument and fumbles for his weapon.

"Parry. I will help anon. Quick—out with your sword! So! now for me. So again! Now, I have him; now, thrust home, Doctor!" and as Faust obeys, Valentine falls with a cry back on to the stones.

Mephisto gives one look at him, and takes his companion by the arm. "Quick, away before the alarm is raised!"

He hurries Faust from the scene of the disaster before the latter has fully realised what has happened. The whole affair has not occupied two minutes, and before the noise has attracted attention and the hue and cry is raised, the Devil and his pupil are a mile away, safe in some of the darkest streets of the old town.



Valentine lies on the stones alone for a second or two, but his cry has roused someone, and a moment or so later a window is flung open, followed by another and another, and people cry out to each other to know what has happened.

Then a crowd collects round the fallen man down in the street, and as Gretchen appears at her door to see if she can render help, they cry out to her that it is her brother, and he is mortally wounded.

Instead of coming forward, Gretchen shrinks back with a low cry—she has an instinct of what is coming; but at the sound of her voice the prostrate man raises himself, and beckons to her—to her and to them all to come nearer.

She obeys, but for a moment he can only glare at her in speechless hate, and when he speaks, it is gasping for breath in a way that is painful to behold.

“You’ve done—it—badly,” he says. “You’ve not carried—it—far—enough, my sister. Listen, I tell you this—in—in—in confidence: now that you’ve chosen a life of shame, do the thing—properly—properly——”

Gretchen cries out, but he gathers up his remaining strength and goes on relentlessly: “What’s done is done. They always begin with one—in secret—and then go on—end—end with a dozen in the daylight—in the——”

His voice is beginning to fail, but he rouses himself again: “I see the time when thou wilt be the friend of beggars—and vile creatures that haunt the shadows—who live—I see the time——”

Dame Martha interrupts him, and, coming forward, takes Gretchen into her arms. “Commend thy soul to God, nor spend thy dying breath in slander.”

Valentine turns towards her with a movement of fury. “Could I but reach thee, thou foul hag, I would atone for all my sins,” he screams furiously; but the jerk has brought on the final hæmorrhage, and he sinks back

murmuring: "I now commend my soul to God, passing to Him a soldier brave and true."

And, persuaded that he has done a man's full duty, Valentine passes away a moment later, in the street, surrounded by the sympathising crowd; while Dame Martha takes poor Gretchen up into her arms and literally drags her into the house.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CARNIVAL OF EVIL

MEANTIME Mephisto spirits Faust away into a place of safety.

There is much to fear if his *protégé* lingers about the old town, the danger of his death being perhaps the thing the Devil would care least about. Something worse menaces—the danger of salvation.

So far Faust is ignorant of Gretchen's treble sorrow. Living in a round of amusements (or rather of experiments in pleasure), he has not heard of the mother's sudden and suspicious death, and does not dream of the secret of their love having been surprised, and has no reason for in any way connecting with Gretchen the brawler whom he killed in self-defence on her doorstep.

The Devil has no intention of letting him know the true state of the case for some time yet.

Great sorrow is sometimes *such* a teacher of central facts ; comes so often in the form of a flood of purifying, fiery light, revealing many things that were neighbour to us, but unseen and untouched.

Its undertone is unity, and it brings us into close, if temporary, kinship with the many who also have battled in the flames. Sorrow must surely be nearly related to love, for it has so many of her attributes. It has such a power of death over our lower self, and is like the fire which was fabled to renew one's youth, and into which one had best go naked, for all artificial wrappings were

shrivelled and consumed, while the tortured body writhed and moaned, but grew fair again.

Such a process as this was far from the Devil's intentions indeed, and he no doubt carefully reviewed the situation, and took all things into account. There was much that Faust might still do to neutralise coming evil, and the fool, under the spur of remorse, would be quite capable of doing it to the uttermost. So Mephisto decides that the story shall be left untold till a great deal later on; till all the evil is safely accomplished; till Gretchen is past praying for; till the little fluttering, unborn thing has come to birth only to pass to a cruel death.

Then, later on, when it is too late for any heed or any help, there is no reason why these facts should not come to light—*then* hopeless grief and useless repentance may have full sway in Faust's heart, and may be fairly trusted to further no designs but those of the Evil One.

. . . . .

Strange and wild is the next scene! It is a May night away on the hills, but with no coolness, no soft moonlight, no calm, no stars.

The atmosphere is turgid and heavy and hot. All distant objects are invisible, and even the outlines of things close at hand are blurred and distorted by a drifting, yellowish haze. Everything seems weighed down and stupefied; and all that one can sense is approaching storm, catastrophe of some kind; for there is a feeling of heated, hurried breathing somewhere behind the mist, a knowledge of evil force at work, an expectation of result, which all things are sharing!

We are in the midst of the sinister Hartz Mountains, and on the eve of the greatest festival of evil in all the year—the *May-night orgy of the Brocken*!

It is the place, the time, when all passions, human, and lower than human, are not merely released from all re-

straint, but whipped, urged, *spurred*, to their wildest, vilest height.

Faust and Mephisto toil painfully up the steep hill-path in the sultry, stagnant air, following the light of a will-of-the-wisp that dances lightly on in front of them, leads them round in large aimless circles and then suddenly vanishes. They halt in the yellow half-darkness, tired and perplexed, and Faust looks round with a certain shrinking, half of disgust and half of fear; there is something adhesive and pervasive about this creeping mist; it seems to lay unclean hands upon you.

But now a change is coming! The yellow curtain begins to waver under an unseen influence, and suddenly puffs of wind—short, hot blasts, bringing strange prurient odours—begin to fan the mountain side. The cloud-curtain is torn, first showing large rents through which glimpses may be caught of dizzy heights and dizzier depths, of towering firs, ranges of heather, and jutting masses of crag, and then a few minutes later, as the storm, long pent up, breaks, the thick haze is quickly ravelled into little shreds, and these rags of cloud go hurrying for shelter to any crevice or coppice they may spy. The storm has begun in good earnest. Wild winds come screaming through the narrow defiles and go eddying upwards to circle round the heights. The usually solemn pine-trees toss their branches, gesticulating wildly, and moan and creak and cry. The circling wind grows to a hurricane, and in its wild curves sweeps small loose rocks, stones, and trees out of the path before it, and flips them like so much dust over into the ravines.

Cloud meets cloud above, and the battle that rages in the air adds its note to the general roar, till there is one continuous howl of fury—the savage war-cry of untrammelled elements!

Faust is driven blindly hither and thither by the gusts, and seeks shelter at last behind a big boulder, where Mephisto joins him, and they both stand watching the

progress of the gale. The smaller rocks round them are swaying to and fro with a crashing, grinding noise that penetrates above the general uproar, and now and then the wind catches one as if it were a pebble, hurling it against a clump of firs, when trees and broken crag go whirling down the steep precipice together, bringing ruin to all that they encounter.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, there is a lull in the general fury ; the wind dies down till the shriek has become only a low cooing murmur ; the voice of the trees sinks to a whisper, and under Faust's feet the earth *thrills* gently. Looking down, he sees that the heather is full of hurrying, creeping things—mice, lizards, a mass of insect and other stranger life ; and these creatures are tearing wildly about, running over each other, killing, maiming, trampling friend or foe underfoot, but in unreasonable, frantic haste all the time, scurrying, hurrying up the hill, towards some unknown goal of fascination.

*Again the earth thrills restlessly !* The mountain even is awake, alive to all that is happening, and pants to join in the festival of lust ; her breasts heave with some strange subterranean breathing, and the rocking ground grows hotter and hotter, till the *obscure dull soil becomes transparent*, and Faust can see the roots of the pine-trees twisting and turning about like long black snakes, and lo ! far beneath in the depths of the rock, the veins of mother earth, erstwhile cold, unimpassioned metal, have turned to channels of fire, and in them are seething and hissing, fiery currents of molten gold.

It is a scene of terror before the revelry has begun. None but those strong in evil may face undaunted such wild abandon. The world is magic-mad ; there is a wildness, a shrieking unrestraint, that is indescribable and terrifying.

Faust, flushed and breathless, gazes at the tumult from their place of shelter. The madness of the scene is beginning to take hold of him. His eyes follow the track

of the crashing avalanche, and shine with fierce exultation, and he talks incessantly, calling to his companion to notice this or that freak of fury. Mephisto, calm as ever, eyes him, not the gale, but answers and explains, lending himself to the other's mood, and by his very calm increasing Faust's passion and excitement.

There comes another capricious lull in the storm after the wind has been raving round them as if specially bent on tearing them out of their shelter and whirling them away to destruction, and in the semi-silence that falls, Mephisto points to a long, streaming black cloud that is tearing up one of the passes.

"Dost hear—that raving song—there in the distance—now behind us too? There—there again, again—now round the heights."

Faust's eyes follow the pointing finger, for, as the Devil speaks, the air above is darkened with a swarming crowd that seems to suddenly blow in from all quarters at once, while the sides of the hill, too, are dotted with breathless climbers.

The swarms in the air go shrieking past them, borne on the wings of the hurricane. A mad crowd: women, their white bodies gleaming in the uncertain light, their long dark hair streaming out behind them, mounted on strange steeds, goats, swine, sticks, wingless things, but seemingly endowed with power for this flight of evil. And after the women, a crying of deeper voices, and a herd of men trailing less quickly and less easily through the murky atmosphere on long magic cloaks.

Ere these have passed the women-crowd has returned, circling upon its own tracks; and then close to where Faust is crouching, the whole mob swoops down upon the ground. The climbing crowd reach them and greet them, and the scene on earth-level grows to one of tumult and carnage, each being recklessly, wantonly, striking and wounding all that comes in the way of their frantic desire for haste, haste, haste!

Again some sudden whim seizes the multitude; once more the evil steeds are mounted, and they rise in one shrieking black mass (like a crowd of evil birds startled when feeding on their prey), pause in mid-air to gather strength for further flight, and then go tearing away to the higher crags. The climbers, too, have rushed upwards, and the place is left deserted and comparatively quiet.

Mephisto stands looking after them with a smile of quiet amusement, but when he turns to speak to his *protégé*, it is to find that Faust has disappeared..



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CARNIVAL CONTINUES

THE Devil goes in search of his rash pupil, and only finds him after some time and with difficulty. After considerable searching, a faint voice answers from a distance, and Mephisto, making his way thither through the jostling crowd that still throngs some parts of the mountain, rescues a bruised and exhausted man, and then, striking out boldly at the climbers who would thrust them out of the way, brings his pupil back to their place of refuge.

Faust, getting back his breath, becomes again eager, and undaunted would fain join once more in the wild game; but the Devil, with an eye on the returning crowd in mid-air, pushes and persuades and at last manages to lead his grumbling and reluctant pupil through the throng on foot, out of the worst of the tumult and down into the shelter of a little hollow on the lower slopes of the mountain.

Faust still protests and declaims, but in vain. The elder knows the peril for one not fully fledged in wickedness, and is firm. He has no mind to let his prey be torn to pieces by a pack of his own bloodhounds.

The little sheltered glade that they have entered has been turned into a sort of Vanity Fair. Booths have been erected, and small camp-fires form a nucleus round which small groups gather for one purpose or another. It is a noisy place, but a scene of peace compared to the one they have left.

Mephisto pauses on the edge of the copse and gives some words of explanation and introduction.

"Look at the merry crowd! A hundred fires all in a row! 'Tis an old saying, is it not?—'Within the great round world we make our own small worlds and cower in them.'"

Faust is still sulky and does not answer.

Mephisto continues pleasantly: "Look at the people, dancing, talking, cooking, drinking, love-making. Come, be friendly, if but to please your guide. As for that cursed music, one must get used to it. I will go forward introducing you—you follow."

Faust submits with a bad grace, and they go up together to the nearest encampment, to a group of shivering old men who are trying to warm themselves round a dying fire. There is wood to hand in plenty, but no one seems to have thought of putting on fresh fuel. Old shaking hands are stretched out over the dying embers, but their owners are so engaged in querulously setting forth that favourite topic of old age—the decadence of the times—that possibly no one has noticed that the warmth of their own centre is gradually decreasing.

As Faust and Mephisto come up quietly behind this group, there is a wise wagging of all the heads in process; something just said must have been thoroughly agreed with.

The Devil speaks to the group and asks why they have chosen their camping ground just on the edge of everything, instead of going into the middle of the fun.

It is doubtful if the old gentlemen hear him. At any rate they take no manner of notice of the interruption, and one shrivelled old fellow, in a scrupulously neat but faded uniform, lifts his voice in continuation of the previous subject.

"Nations are just like women. They care for you just as long as your star is in the ascendant."

"Just as long!" echoes the circle. "Just as long!"

An ex-minister on the right hand of the first speaker takes up the parable.

"People have strayed far indeed from the right path that they once moved in. It was a golden age, then, when we ruled them, cared for them, and were all in all to them."

A man opposite puts in a grumble that is almost inaudible, except that it has something to do with money, and ends with the usual observation that the present world is upside down.

He does not seem to be of much account, however, for there is a short silence ; but the old heads still shake on, perhaps as much from age as assent this time. The next one who stirs is a man with long untidy hair and disordered dress—a great contrast to his neighbour, the trim soldier.

"Why, nowadays no one ever opens a book that has any sense in it." (It is easy to guess a forgotten author.)

"The rising generation is a generation of fools."

The Devil pulls a long face, and suddenly looks as old as any one of those round the dying fire. "The world is indeed ripe for doom," he says shakily. "'Tis my last visit to Brocken, and with my age creation withers."

The circle nod gravely without turning round to see who has spoken. They have heard the remark this time, perhaps because they agree with it ; and as our two move away to another group, a fresh voice continues the old theme.

Mephisto and Faust now make for the centre of the fair, and ere they get much further are nearly swept off their feet by the clamorous crowd, and are pushed about hither and thither, and jostled almost as roughly as they were before, but with less peril this time.

The noise everywhere is deafening ; for besides the many groups interested only in themselves, and oblivious to aught outside the glow of their own fire, there are hundreds who have come this night for purposes of barter and gain, and these are shouting each other down in their efforts to

attract custom. A filthy old hag seizes Faust's arm as he passes her, and pours out voluble praises of her stock-in-trade.

"BUY! BUY! NOW is your time! ALL sorts! ALL kinds! Yet nothing without its counterpart on earth—nothing that has not wrought some evil; no dagger that has not plunged in blood; no cup that's free from poison; no trinket that has not snared a woman's soul; no sword that has not cut some sacred tie. BUY! BUY!"

It is extraordinary how many words she can pour out in a minute, and as she clutches Faust with one skinny hand, with the other she pulls out her jewels and weapons from the booth, and dangles them in front of his eyes. He gazes at her spell-bound and cannot free himself, but his guide brushes away her hand and laughs lightly.

"Behind the times, my sister. These are old tales, and naught but novelty will please to-day," and they pass on.

Faust puts his hands over his ears. "A fair indeed," he says distractedly; "may I but keep my sense through it all." But he still follows Mephisto as he pushes his way deeper into the crowd. The wildness round breeds infection; his heart keeps time to the mad, magic rhythm beating through the air.

And as the night wears on, Faust throws himself more and more into the spirit of the scene, and the Devil (ever untouched) has to be the drag now instead of the spur.

They join the crowd of dancers, disporting themselves where the fun is at its wildest, Faust taking a young, dark-eyed witch, and Mephisto, true to himself, choosing rotten age.

Clang, clang—throb, throb—on goes the weird, unearthly music; no dancing on earth was ever as wild and swift as this. The witch's eyes gleam, and her breath is hot and hurried, and as Faust flashes back ardent glances at his facile companion, we lose sight of the couple amidst the maze of dancers, and there remains only Mephisto, whom we know, talking ribaldry to his old companion as

they circle round, and laughing immoderately as she answers him in kind.

Where is Faust?

Mephisto becomes aware of his absence after a time, drops the old hag suddenly, and looks anxiously to left and right. Not among the dancers; and the hill is not a fit place for a novice to go a-wandering in alone.

Has he gone back to the heights? For, if so, perchance one short delirious flight; perhaps not that—but certain doom.

The Devil curses his wayward pupil, and once more sets out to look for him.

The search is not long this time. A solitary figure is standing at a little distance from the throng, *with its back to Vanity Fair!*

The Devil comes up to him. “Why have you left the charming damsel, and the dance?” His tone is suave, with irritation. Anger takes some people that way, and such are best left unroused.

Faust explains briefly.

The Devil shrugs his shoulders. Really, to come to the Brocken and play the prude!

“And was this trifle all?” he inquires.

Faust turns round on his tormentor, showing a drawn and haggard face, and for answer points away into the darkness. A burst of merriment reaches them from the distant fair.

“Well?” says the Devil impatiently.

“Seest thou not—far off—the figure of a lonely child, pale, tall, and fair—like Gretchen? With shackled feet—and moving slowly—slowly——”

“Look not upon her; ’tis a magic shape, boding no good.”

“And her eyes are eyes such as the dead have. Canst thou not see?”

The Devil takes Faust by the arm and shakes him boisterously, but to no purpose.

"Look! look! Ah! *Round her neck a crimson thread no broader than a knife!* Look! look!"

"I see it," says the other shortly, though he is careful not to look in the direction indicated. "'Tis a vision, an illusion that oft is met with; to each it wears the semblance of one he loves. She takes her head right off and wears it underneath her arm at times."

Mephisto's tongue runs on; he is saying anything, everything, to gain time, the current of his thoughts working swiftly in another direction under the flow of his words. And Faust still stares at the vision as it slowly fades away, wondering what it may mean, full of the old foreboding, and retracing the past scene by scene, making resolutions for the future.

Mephisto is also working forward with plans for that future, for he fully realises all that this sudden reaction means—**DESIRE OF THE FLESH HAS FAILED!**

Auerbach's cellar, that was the first bait, and Faust watched the scene as he might have watched the gambols of a heap of greedy puppies.

Gretchen, that was the next, and, mad with the influence of the love-potion, he wooed her careless of any after-effects; but that snare not only failed of its purpose after a while, but began to work balefully in an opposite direction. Passion at that, its ethereal end, threatened to sweep over the border and merge itself in a self-sacrificing love; while passion in its red-hot depths on the Brocken has bred sudden disgust.

Was ever mortal so hard to win?

What manner of man is this, who has a vision of conscience in the midst of the festival of evil, and turns his back on all else, to follow and understand?

"... When thou perforce must own,  
A good man in his darkest aberration,  
Of the right path is conscious still."

The forgotten warning flashes through Mephisto's mind, and stirs him to sudden action.

Baffled ! Never ! The bait has been too coarse, that is all. The mistake is easily rectified. It should have been foreseen.

The Devil glances at the drawn face, still gazing earnestly out into the night, at its finely-cut features, the broad, scholarly brow, and deep-set, meditative eyes, and confesses to himself that it should certainly have been foreseen. Long years of steady self-control have so disciplined the servant of flesh, that to rouse it to more than passing revolt and lawlessness by such coarse stimuli were well-nigh impossible.

But wealth, power, and fame, LUSTS OF THE MIND, may succeed where desire of the body has failed, and it will do no harm to have lust of the eye in a refined and subdued form as a quiet accessory.

Meantime Faust has sinned, and will have to suffer bitterly for that sin ; and the Fiend smiles as he thinks over the possibilities of "cursing God" that open before a man in agony.

But the Evil One has no more time for reflection. He has matured his plans, and with practical common-sense begins to set them going that minute. He stops his flow of words, hums an air indifferently, and then gives a sigh as of one impatient, but courteously anxious to conceal the fact. When Faust turns round at last, his guide smiles at him gaily.

"Come ! If thou'rt still craving for illusion, there is a little theatre close to. Shall we go there?"

A dark look crosses Faust's face at the covert sneer, but he follows without speaking. He is perhaps beginning to realise that silence and reticence are the only fit weapons with which to meet such an adversary ; and so together they pass on up the hill.

The man is overwrought, and worn out by the struggle with whirlwinds terrestrial and infernal ; his body and mind imperiously demand rest. The Spirit of Evil requires time to mature his plans ; there is to be a pause, a rest, a sleep.

It is a strange theatre, the one to which Mephisto takes his pupil. There is no stage, no light ; there are no actors ! The end of their short journey is but a cave in the hillside. The Evil One enters, the tired man following blindly, and with no heed to where his steps are leading him. In answer to a touch in the blank darkness, he obediently seats himself on a slab of rock, and, dropping his head on his hands, waits mechanically for further commands.

Faust is utterly spent and wearied ; after the first raving flood of emotion, there has come the inevitable ebb-tide. The tumult within has suddenly subsided, and wave by wave his thoughts recede and recede, drawing back slowly to the depths from whence they came, leaving behind them on the sands the froth and scum and refuse that the storm brought forth, and rippling silently, quietly away from the land back to the eternal ocean. Presently even the ripple of consciousness ceases—there has come the time of slack water. The sea has gathered itself to itself, and is at rest.

The Devil, to whom darkness and light are one, watches the heavy eyelids droop over the tired eyes, and when the quiet breathing tells of sleep, he turns on his heel with a light laugh and passes out. Let the fool sleep and dream, and sleep again. It is the time for rest and for *forgetfulness* !



## CHAPTER XVII

### USELESS REMORSE

WHILE Faust idles and dreams the swift months away, with Marguerite life drags by on leaden feet. Long hours, long days, and scarcely one that passes without its reminder of the terrible reality, of the nameless future.

She dreams perchance, too, poor soul ! for a brief night, that they are once more together, that all is understood and made right again ; but only to wake with a start to the actualities about her, to her loneliness, and to her disgrace.

Sometimes for days she will not leave the house, and then a fit of wandering will seize her, and she will walk for hours in the streets of the old town, comforting herself with the idea that he must be quite near by now, perhaps even just round the next corner. No, not there ! Well, then, to-morrow, at the latest, he *must* come ! At dusk perhaps, and by the path leading down from the hills.

She goes back to the house again and busies herself for a while with familiar tasks, the ceaseless pain deadened with details, soothed with routine. There is the room to dust, things to tidy away, the plants to water. Ah no ! the myrtle is dead, and still stands withered and brown upon her window-sill.

Then the old hopelessness comes on again with redoubled force, and Dame Martha on her next visit will find the girl sitting numbed and cold, and gazing away into vacancy, having evidently not moved for hours.

The foolish, good-natured old woman fears, and has

good reason for her fears. The serene blue eyes that gazed so steadily at her, with almost a child's unblinking stare, have now a wandering look. They hardly seem controlled by the mind within, now roaming aimlessly over familiar objects, then suddenly fixed on some sight not visible to others.

In the cathedral, one day, Gretchen swooned away, and afterwards spake of an evil thing that came and stood behind her and whispered. They do not go there again.

. . . . .

The months wear on! A drowsy summer clad in a shimmering heat-haze broods over the little town, and brings such a spirit of languor and lassitude that there is a stagnant silence during most of the long day. The chimes seem the only thing that escapes the infection, steadily ringing away the torpid hours.

In the cool of the evening the spell is lifted. Children come out into the streets to laugh and play. Mothers with babies bring the little ones out of the stifling houses, and, sitting on the doorsteps, hush them to sleep; and all who have the time and the energy go out over the draw-bridge and up to the hills by the same path that old Doctor Faustus ascended on Easter Day.

. . . . .

Summer droops to autumn! The trees paint a leafy sunset on the hillside, and human life stirs into briskness again. The gales come, and the painted leaves and the swallows go swirling about the sky together.

Then after the wind comes rain. Wind, storm, and rain! Humanity cowers under its roof-trees, and the closely packed houses seem to huddle together for warmth and shelter inside the ring of grey walls.

Then come colder winds and sleet.

The year grows harsher and bleaker with advancing age—

no winter sunshine, not even a kindly covering of snow, only the moaning winds and the half-frozen rain.

. . . . .

NEW YEAR, at last, which is greeted with great rejoicing. It is a stranger and *may* bring good gifts ! And still the wind, and still the rain !

Then a few weeks more pass. It has come to the bleakest time of all the year, the darkness before the dawn, the barrenness before the first sign of spring. Not a leaf, not a bud, nothing but sodden grass under a sullen sky, and bare boughs tossing in the wind.

Into this bleakness and this bareness Gretchen's baby is born.

A few days pass ! She has turned to it lovingly, and the poor old dame who watches her gives a sigh of relief and goes with a lighter heart about household tasks. All is going well, and the easy-going old soul begins to see a possible future after all ; begins to build castles in the air for her darling ; begins to dream of who knows what fresh start in life. Then one day, when the house is more silent than is wont, and when she creeps up noiselessly to see her charges, it is to find the door open, the things in disorder, the bed empty — Gretchen and the baby have disappeared !

. . . . .

Faust meantime sleeps and dreams, and sleeps again, for many days ; and even when he wakes, the dulness of his trance-like slumber still clings to him, exercising a deadening influence over the finer part of his brain, blunting the edges of his susceptibilities.

It is the working out of that law which brings consequent and equivalent reaction to every action. The whirlwind has passed, but it has swept in foul refuse before it, and has left much that was fair in ruin and decay behind it, and from the débris rises a poisonous miasma that will

hang about the shallow pools and pollute and pervade the mental atmosphere until some great cleansing come.

The Spirit of Evil notes the after-effects of the Brocken, and smiles, and while preparing other attractions for the future, when a normal state shall have been regained, he continues for a while the old round of pleasure—wine and women—and in this his pupil joins more willingly than before.

They celebrate the New Year by an orgy of rejoicing which is carried on for several days. There is then a break in the round of pleasure. Mephisto for some reason gives his pupil an interval in which to think, the first for many months.

Faust is left to himself, and begins to reflect, and finally to seek out his guide and to ask questions; and when we next see the two, they are on a gloomy, far-reaching plain, and *Faust's awakening has begun!*

Mephisto is in a mood of sullen triumph, Faust in mad despair.

A torrent of wild words breaks from the tortured man. "What!—she is ill! In prison! That gentle hapless creature thrust in to herd with criminals! And this was all concealed from me! Nay, thou *shalt* stay! In prison, in anguish past all mending, in the clutches of a cold, unpitying humanity! While I, unwitting, drugged the passing hours with tasteless dissipation, her agony was ever growing greater, till it brought her to the point of death—brought her to that dire peril wherein she now is languishing!"

Mephisto looks up with an indescribable expression as the other pauses. "She is not the first," he says softly.

"*Inhuman monster!* Ah, Eternal Spirit! change this foul thing back again into its bestial form, that it may crouch before me and be spurned. She, not the first! Woe! woe! Can more than one have agonised like this? Would not that first who passed through such a torment have atoned for all who erred since then? The anguish

of this one wringeth my very soul, and thou canst stand and smile over a hundred such ! ”

The Spirit of Ruin looks thoughtfully away across the dim plain. “ Now we have reached that borderland where mortal’s reason wanders and is lost.” He has a pitying contempt for those weak dabblers in black magic, who cannot even face the first trials, but whose unhinged mind is scared back into paths of safety. To him Faust’s emotion seems perhaps but a form of cowardice, moral cowardice.

“ Why seek companionship with us upon a path too hard to tread,” he asks impatiently, “ thou who wouldst fly, and art not proof against a sudden dizziness? Do we seek you? Do not you mortals rather call to us ? ”

Those who would advance along that path must leave all pity and all love behind them.

The tortured man breaks out again into savage imprecation, and once more invokes the avenging spirit from above.

“ Hast finished ? ” says Mephisto wearily.

“ Save her,” says the other fiercely, “ or endless woe be on thy head ! ”

“ I have no power to avert her doom,” says Mephisto with perfect truth. Neither devil nor angel can alter that law of cause and effect, and the time for neutralising past evil by opposing good to it has gone.

“ Who was it thrust her where she is ? ” asks the Spirit of Ruin indifferently—“ thou or I ? ”

Faust only replies with a wild look about him.

“ What wouldst thou grasp? Dost wish to wield the thunderbolt and with it smite the being, however innocent, who obstructs thy path? Wisely indeed you mortals are withheld from such a power.”

Power ! The thought comes suddenly to Faust that he has the power to command obedience from this smiling Fiend. He pulls himself together ; their positions must and shall change. Evil shall be his tool, not his guide ; *and partly it is so from this moment ; and partly it cannot*

*be, for evil is too heavy a weapon for mortals to fence with, and none but God can wield it for an ever-good purpose.*

"Take me to her," says the man abruptly ; "she *shall* be freed."

Mephisto demurs. "And thine own danger? The blood shed by thy hands ; the avenging spirits who wait for thy return? The town?"

The answer is brief and imperious.

Mephisto notices the change of tone. There is a slight hesitation, and then he answers suavely : "What I can do I will ; remember I am not omnipotent. The warder shall sleep soundly ; do thou then take his keys and lead her forth ; I will keep watch outside."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SHADOW ENDS IN DEATH

THE old town lies silent and lifeless in the black darkness that precedes a wintry dawn—lies silent and suffering under a thin coating of half-frozen sleet and mire. The cold is bitter and cruel ; it reminds one of poverty, very low, sordid poverty, in the way it cramps and crushes out all movement and all life, for it is bitter, bitter, and relentlessly cruel.

Even the specks of warmth and light fall a prey to the power that is abroad, for the feeble lamps shudder as the raw blasts come down the funnel-like streets, and cower down in their glass shelters ; while some flicker and go out, as though hopeless of effecting anything in such a desert of darkness and of desolation.

Yet in one place the menacing shadow is ignored, and the bleakness set at defiance, and that too in a stronghold of chill despair. There, where a huddled mass of buildings of sinister aspect with barred windows and massive walls proclaim a prison, the silence is broken by a fresh young voice—some captive is singing.

Some girl is singing as heedlessly and happily as the birds sing when the time of flowers is coming. She is singing to herself, a little ballad out of a fairy tale, crooning away in the darkness without a glance or a thought for that which surrounds her.

There was a wicked stepmother—there always is in German fairy tales—and she killed the little step-girl who

was in her power. But all ended happily, as things always do, for the babe's soul escaped and flew away on white wings ; and the refrain of the song goes—

"Then I became a little forest bird,  
And flew away, flew away,  
Flew away to the woods, flew away."

In the passage Faust has paused with his hand on the lock at the sound of this strange singing.

During his swift strange journey there has been but one thought in his mind, but one purpose—Gretchen must be set at liberty. Then he will take her away somewhere, far away, and together they will begin a new and happy life ; and between his purpose and its accomplishment he sees but one obstacle—the prison door ! The key of that once turned, the rest will follow.

He has expected, and has nerved himself for change, for tears, perhaps for a sight of agony ; but the belief that he brings healing for her sorrow gives him strength to face the scene he has imagined as in front of him.

Now, instead of lamentation, there is this strange sound of singing.

It unnerves him. The rippling notes jar on the heaviness that shrouds the place. The light, fanciful words are in such violent discord with the low moaning that goes echoing through the corridors of this abode of misery, that that they are pregnant with evil and cry aloud in warning.

The listening man is filled with a new foreboding, and stands stricken motionless with fear. Something worse than any conceivable human pain is there to meet him. An undreamt-of horror for which he may be able to find no remedy lurks behind that light singing.

" . . . flew away,  
Flew away to the woods, flew away."

The refrain comes in again, half heard through the closed door ; and as the voice dies away, the cathedral bells ring out the hour.



The execution is fixed for the early hours of the morning, and there is no time for delay or for useless fear. After all, his presence *must* soothe and heal, and his caresses will send into oblivion all that has passed. Faust pushes open the door softly, and enters.

There is a sudden scream, and in the semi-darkness he sees a figure in white spring up from the stone floor, and run and hide in an angle of the wall, straining against the heavy chains that hold her.

"Be still! Be still!" he calls softly. "'Tis I, and I have come to set thee free."

He holds up the lantern that he is carrying, so that its rays fall upon her in her hiding-place, and she faces him, wild-eyed, and panting like a desperate creature at bay; and for a while he gazes at her, uncertain of her identity.

Can this poor fragment of humanity be Gretchen?

This gaunt woman with matted hair straggling over her shoulders, whose carelessly fastened dress scarcely hides the wasted frame beneath, bears no resemblance to the dainty, modest child of a year ago. *And the eyes!* Ah! there is the central sorrow! The damp walls, the chill darkness, the bed of straw, the seamed and sallow face, the meagre figure and hollow cheeks, are but the setting to those altered eyes. Faust looks at them, unable to turn away; and face to face with the ruin of which they tell, realises that all his sorrow, and all his love, will not avail to save.

The poor thing cannot bear the silent scrutiny, and throws herself with a cry for mercy at his feet. She does not recognise him.

"Hush! hush!" he cries despairingly. "Thou'lt wake the warder with thy calling." He sets down the lamp, and with shaking hands fumbles at the lock of the chains that hold her, while she flings herself down on her knees beside him, and begs piteously for a few more hours of life, or, if not that, at least a death faced in the daylight, not in

the darkness ; and when he cannot answer her, she stands up quietly at last, and lets him work unhindered upon the opening of the chains.

He searches through the bunch of rusty keys, and she stands unresisting. "I seem so young to die," she says softly. "It seems too soon to die, for I was young and beautiful—that was the reason of my fall. *Then*, he was with me, who now is *far* away."

The tormented man seizes her wildly, and she shrinks away from him, crying : "Ah, treat me not so roughly, you whom I never saw till now ! I can have done no harm to you."

Faust tightens his grasp unconsciously, and the gentle voice goes on appealingly : "You have me in your power. I will but ask one thing. Ah, give me back my child, once more—once more ! I had it all the night, and then, they took it from me. They say I killed it ; they say it to torment me, and in the streets they sing coarse songs about me—shameful songs."

Faust bends down to the chains again in despair, and manages to open them at last, and then throws himself down upon his knees in front of her, sobbing out words of penitence and love. Their import does not reach the wandering brain, but she looks down and sees the position of prayer and slips down on her knees beside him. "Yes, let us pray," she says simply—"perhaps the saints will hear."

But a moment later she springs up, crying that Hell with all its fires is burning there, below the stones, close underneath the dungeon floor, and her lover dare not come near her even to unclasp the unlocked chains that bind her, as she fancies, to those fires of Hell, and against which she strains so despairingly.

Seconds that seem hours pass by, and the man who would have fain tasted of the sorrows of a universe feels the weight of his own destiny too crushing to be borne, and all his knowledge of the beauty and the ordered

symmetry of life in general avails him nothing in his struggle with the discord in his own heart.

Marguerite's paroxysm passes, and when at length she leans wearily against the wall without moving, he calls her softly by name.

"Gretchen! Gretchen!"

The effect is instantaneous. She turns round with a shadow of her old smile. "Where is he? 'Twas *he* who called!" The sudden movement unclasps the chains, and they fall from her. "Where is he? Now I am free, and I will run to him and fling myself within his arms. He stood and called; the sweet tones of his voice silenced the fiends of Hell!"

Slowly, for fear of alarming her again, Faust comes forward and softly whispers: "It is I."

She recognises him and runs to meet him, all the agony forgiven and forgotten as she cries: "Thou comest to save me, and I *am* saved!"

Pityingly, tenderly he receives her loving caresses, and her manner has become so natural and gentle that he begins to hope once more. Let them but get away together, and he may yet repair the evil done. Time works wonders; loving care works miracles—and she is young.

He would lead her gently towards the door after a while, but she misunderstands him, and the movement angers her; she chides him for wishing to leave so soon, and yet will not come with him. He urges the danger of delay, but she will hear of nothing but love-words and kisses, says he is cold, his manner is unkind, and at last frees herself from his embrace, and turns sadly away.

"Ah, come!" he cries despairingly; but the poor mind has gone wandering back into the past, to the dead murdered mother, the dead babe, and when he puts out his hand to recall her to the present, she shrinks away, and cries that it is stained with blood, her brother's blood.

"Oh, let the past be past, or thou wilt kill me!" he moans.

"No, no," she answers softly. "*Thy fate is still to live!* Listen, for I must tell thee of the graves that must be ready for the morrow. First, lay my mother in the fairest place, and then her son beside her; and then prepare a resting-place for me. Let it be somewhere near them—thou wilt not lay me *very* far away?—and lay my child within my arms, for no one else would care to be so near to me again. And yet you held me once as close as that!"

"Thou knowest, then, that it is I still near thee? Wilt thou not come with me?"

"Come. Where? Out into the world?"

"Out into freedom."

"Yes, if the grave is ready I will come; will take those few short steps that lead to freedom; will tread the little length of path that leads me to the eternal resting-place. Thou wilt go hence, but I—I may not go. Would to God that I *could* follow thee!"

"But thou *canst* follow! See, does not the door stand open wide?"

Marguerite sinks back on to the straw couch murmuring, "I dare not."

Faust watches her helplessly, not daring to touch her lest he should break the slender hold that she has on things present; and even as he watches, the restless mind slips back from knowledge of its surroundings and of him.

She crouches in the straw muttering to herself, and as he draws back into the shadow, she pulls out a bundle from a hiding-place. It is only a wisp of straw tied round with rags, but she takes it up tenderly into her arms, and sits there rocking backwards and forwards, hushing the little one to sleep.

Again the solemn bells peal out the hour, and they startle her from her happy reverie. She jumps to her feet in alarm, and looks about her. He draws back further into the shadow—will she see the open door and pass through it?

She begins creeping slowly, stealthily along the wall, still holding the precious bundle in her arms ; *and then the whole grim tragedy is acted out before her lover's eyes !* She throws the child from her into the river, stands watching for a moment, and then runs screaming for help ! help ! help ! before it drowns, and tumbles blindly into her lover's arms.

He grasps her roughly and silences her by main force, and the roughness seems to bring back some degree of recollection and sense.

"Yes, yes," she gasps, she will come, she *has* come, they are walking up the hill together now. He has got her as far as the door, but she cannot pass that stone because her mother is sitting there and watching her.

There is no time for further urging, and her lover, seeing the hopelessness of the position, seizes her and would *drag* her away into freedom, but she struggles, and with the strength of the insane throws him off and goes back to her corner.

A very pale glimmer of light begins to show through the arrow-shaped window, and once more Faust cries to her to come, that day is dawning, that at any moment they may be surprised.

She does not move from her position on the straw. "Day, day," she answers sadly. "Yes, my day of judgment dawns ; it should have been my wedding-day."

She crouches down upon the foul bed of straw, breathing slowly and with difficulty, and in the growing daylight it does not need her words of prophecy for one to see that her hours on earth are numbered.

After a while she begins talking again, in broken sentences, at first conscious of Faust's presence. "It should have been my wedding-day. Ah ! do not tell the world that Gretchen loved thee all too well. Alas ! the wreath has faded, but you and I will meet again—not at a wedding feast—but meet again—again——"

Her voice changes. "Ah, look, the crowd is gathering—

silently the streets are filled—to overflowing—listen to the tolling of the bell. See, there lies the token of the sentence they have passed on me—the white stick broken at my feet——”

The terror of the imaginary scene (so real to her) grows upon her. She struggles to her feet and cries that they are binding her roughly with cords and pushing her along, that she is now bound to the chair of death; and her actions imitate most fearfully the scene she is imagining.

Then there is a moment's suspense while she waits for the knife to fall, and in the pause, the silence and the horror of the grave seems to have taken hold of the living earth, and the man passing with her through this valley of the shadow cries out: “Now, would to God that I had not been born!”

The chill terror has seized upon them both, and they stand as if paralysed, waiting—waiting—when hurried steps down the corridor rouses one of them to the reality of things. Faust springs in front of Gretchen with the vague idea of protecting her, when Mephisto appears in the doorway, crying to them to come, and at once, or all is lost.

Poor Gretchen screams out at the sight of him, and cries to her lover to chase away the evil thing that would get hold of her; but Faust takes the Devil's part and urges her to come with them and live.

She answers by a despairing moan, and, turning away from the man she loves, she cries to Heaven for help and for defence; and help comes, in the shape of the supreme gift—death!

Swift and merciful is the end; her last look, her last faltering words for Faust, her last thought a fear and a foreboding for his future with such a guide.

As the poor worn body falls back, Mephisto pronounces sentence.

"She is judged," he says sanctimoniously.

"Is saved," echoes a distant chorus of voices softly.

The Devil looks up malignantly, and, laying a compelling hand on Faust, hurries him away ; but as they disappear the soft voices call after them—*and one calls Faust by name !*

## PART II

### THE ASCENT UNTO SPIRIT

" Let but a soul toil on, toil ever,  
To such we bring a loosening of his bonds."

(" Wer immer strebend sich bemüht  
Den können wir erlösen.")

ANGEL'S CHORUS, Act v.



## FAUST'S CYCLE OF LIFE. PATH OF WISDOM AND WORK

There are many paths that go through the Finite to the Infinite, but two that are most familiar. Of these Faust takes one, the path of Wisdom, and apprehends as usual, first by INSTINCT, then by EXPERIENCE, and lastly by INSIGHT.

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## MARGUERITE'S CYCLE OF LIFE. PATH OF LOVE AND FAITH

We have only portions of Marguerite's life given to us in the story, and whole periods of her development are not touched upon: as for instance the time that elapses between her death and her gaining of the high sphere where she meets Faust. We are therefore obliged to leave blank spaces, but her life seems to be a faint forth-shadowing of the mystery of the Eternal-feminine. In Book I. she is the terrestrial (Kamic) woman, lower than man in evolution, and acting as a disturbing, almost as a deteriorating, influence. In Book II. she reappears merged in her celestial counterpart (Buddhic), and from her home, the region of divine love (Mary's kingdom), shining out far above man, and acting as a beacon for him on his upward path.

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These two cycles touch each other on earth, and then are interlaced in the Heaven-World, where Love and Wisdom joined make the perfect whole; Love bringing in its train Faith and the passive nourishing principle; Wisdom the active and creative principles. It is the eternal marriage, that of the archetypal man with the archetypal woman.

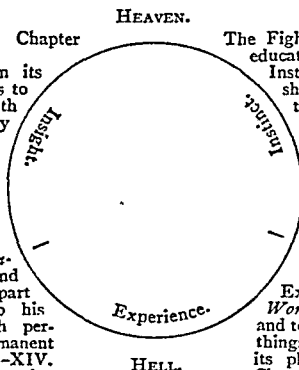
## PART II.

## PART I.

## The Baptism of Wisdom. Chapter XXIII.

Wisdom has now given its utmost gift. Faust's life is to be completed by union with another force—typified by Marguerite.

\* Experience in the *Mental World*. Art and literature play their part in leading Faust on to his goal, but are at length perceived to be impermanent also. Part II., Chaps. I.-XIV. Experience of administrative work. Development of knowledge of humanity. Life put on a broader basis. Chaps. XIV.-XXI.



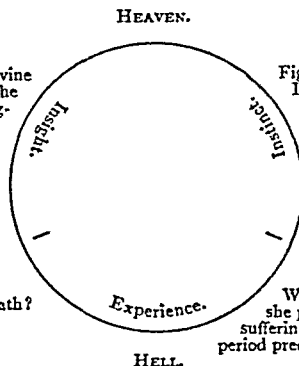
## The Fight for Self-education.

Instinct breaks the shell of inherited tradition. Reaction sends Faust into a mixture of atheism and (magic) superstition. Instinct in equilibrium drives Faust out to nature. Chaps. I.-V.

Experience in the *Desire World* leads to discrimination, and to the recognition that earthly things are impermanent, and that its pleasures lead to suffering. Chap. VI. to end of Part I.

\* Does not include the episode of the Mothers, which is an interlude of Insight.

Her baptism of divine insight was given in the Love-sphere, Mary's kingdom.



Fight for self-enjoyment. Love of sunlight and pleasure. Dislike and fear of Mephisto. Belief in Church Worship and love of Faust.

Probation after death?

We are inclined to think that she passed through her expiatory suffering (Hell) on earth, in the period preceding her death.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

IT is for the second part of *Faust* that it is thought this popular version of the story will be of possible service.

There are few people who, taking up a translation of *Faust*, would not read on and on, easily picturing some background for the spoken words of each scene, the simple human beauty and pathos of the story carrying them out of themselves, till at last they reached the death of Marguerite, and laid down the book with dimmed eyes.

With Part II., however, it would be different. This volume at first sight seems so muddled, so inconsequent, so fantastic. There is such a roar and rush of life; the pages are over-crowded with such an eddying, whirling multitude of characters, human, allegorical, symbolical, and spiritual; the scenes follow each other with such bewildering rapidity, and often seem so totally unconnected one with the other, that the casual reader finds his comprehension and his interest waning, and skips—and skips—till at length he turns over the pages more and more rapidly, and, hurrying to the end, reads perhaps a little of the closing scenes, wonders at the mystical choruses in Heaven, thinks it a pity that so lovely a tale should have such a jumbled ending, and replaces the volume on the shelf, for it probably not to be touched again.

This is a thousand pities, for Marguerite's death at the end of Part I. is only the middle of a wonderful story, and those readers who break off there get a very incomplete

idea of the central character and of the woman who loved him.

. . . . .

Now, in order to bring Part II. within sympathetic touch of the general reader, two things must be done to it.

*First.* The "STORY OF FAUST" must be brought into prominence, and all that affects the hero must be amplified and considered in some detail. *Secondly.* All that does not directly bear upon Faust, and upon the working out of his character, must be thrown more or less into the shade.

This treatment of the subject will make matters simpler at once, and is the only reasonable plan for beginners to follow. It must be left to older students to follow out Goethe's wish—namely, to consider each act or set of scenes as a small world, and to study such by themselves.

Very strangely, the great poet went so far as to deny that there was any fundamental conception running through his bewildering drama, saying that all the "rich, varied, and highly diversified life" brought to light in it could not have been strung upon the slender thread of one idea. But we are hardly inclined to take Goethe quite at his word in this matter, for, as we study the masterpiece, we become so conscious of the golden thread running through the intricate maze of life which he brings before us.

There is a unity and a purpose which would not be accounted for, if we believed his light remark that he had done no more than round off and elaborate the innumerable scenes that came thronging into his imagination.

Or, if this absence of purpose is true of the poet, then it is not true of that unnamed power which worked through him. *This*, then, had the purpose and the motive in its work, and Goethe may have been near the truth when he said petulantly—

"People come and ask me what I meant to embody in my *Faust*. As if I knew myself and could tell them!"

We have indeed two selves, and the self that sketched this parable of human life was not the same as the self that gave the above flippant answer.

However, whether the golden thread is a reality, or merely a convenient fiction (like a line of latitude) we must still take it as a guide through the bewildering tangle of life that riots through the poet's mind, or else we may get swept out of our path and away from all our bearings, and may be lost for ever in his phantom world.

NOTE.—We should advise the students to study carefully for a few minutes the life-cycles at the beginning of this section before beginning to read. They are merely artificial diagrams, but will be useful as showing the map of the two lives at a glance.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEPTHS AND THE HEIGHTS

OF the scenes through which Faust passes in the interval which elapses between the agony in the dungeon with which Part I. closes, and the peace and silence of the hills with which Part II. opens, we are given no description.

Faust prayed to FEEL, and his prayer has been granted to the uttermost. The world of sensation has been laid open before him ; he has explored its heights, he has been hurled into its depths ; but of his experiences in the latter, four terrible words from a familiar ritual sum up all that we know : " He descended into HELL." <sup>1</sup>

He descended into Hell, not powerful in the might of innocence like that Great One, but stricken and bowed down with the weight of grief and guilt.

We can but faintly realise what a nature like Faust's must have suffered, for he would have walked deliberately into the heart of the flames ; there would be no evasion, no attempt to excuse or escape.

He was ignorant of the terrible results that were being worked out by the forces that he set going ; but he is none the less responsible for them. He sowed the seed, and by unalterable law *must* reap the harvest.

And, again, he did not know ! Yes, because he did not seek to know. He was not told, because he did not care to ask ; and his fault and its consequences are ever before him.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the Hell in which Mephisto is Ruler, but a place of torment that was self-created or voluntarily endured.

He remembers her childlike trust in him, unto the last ; her unconsciousness of sin, while sinning for love of him. Then her agony, her months of agony, while he killed time with coarse amusements that scarcely interested him even superficially, but were sufficient to divert the careless mind from all thought of the possible result of a few days' pleasure.

His sin is ever before him. He has picked a flower from the garden of God, and after a few moments' wonder at its freshness and its fragrance, has let it fall heedlessly into the dust.

We may but stand upon the brink of such an abyss of torment and despair, nor seek to follow the strong soul that fights its way through the terrors of those depths.

We can but wait in the surface-world until—his trial finished—Faust shall return. And we wait in certain hope, knowing that for a finite fault there *can* be no infinite punishment. The hell through which he is passing is one of expiation, not one of vengeance ; and when Faust shall have fully worked out and exhausted the evil forces that in returning curves have come back to him, their forsender, and when he shall have duly comprehended and assimilated the dreadful past, he will re-appear.

He will re-appear worn and scarred, with the traces of the fire about him, bearing marks in the flesh that will remain till the day of his liberation from the flesh ; but he will return stronger, wiser, *better*, than when he sank—stronger for his sojourn in the darkness, understanding more fully, having progressed towards knowledge of the light by realisation of its opposite.

*(The Silence of the Hills, Midsummer)*

"I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

A phrase that is as literally true to some of us as it was to Faust.

It was not without deep reason that older faiths built so many of their shrines on the mountain-tops ; nor without meaning when the Greeks, in their wise fairy-tales, spoke of soft white clouds which, touching the green summits, dissolved into waving mist, leaving a god unveiled.

It is amidst the silence of the hills that we find Faust again after many days ; and Time and Nature, the great healers, have him in their care.

He has stopped halfway up the mountain-side, on the higher grassy slopes that are carpeted with Alpine flowers. Above him there is only fir-forest, bare rock, and rocky débris, and then the sheer heights crowned with eternal snow. Below, the green land slopes down to the valley with many a break and dimple, till its curves are lost to sight under the waters of a crescent-shaped lake which lies in the lap of the hills.

Opposite there are more hills. It is a land of heights, but the southern ones are uncrowned with snow, and one feels that behind and beyond those lie the plains.

Faust sits gazing before him with unseeing eyes, conscious only of utter weariness and fatigue, and that dull soreness that comes after intense and prolonged suffering and pain.

The pain has gone, but he is too weary to rest ; his mind too overtired and weak to be able to control and stop the machinery of thought, which whirls round and round unsteadily and unceasingly, accomplishing no work, but filling the place with din and confusion, and in peril of breaking down any moment and wrecking all that is near.

But the period of isolation is over, and when the twilight falls, the two great healers, Time and Nature, take him into their care.

Nature deals first with the sufferer, for she send troops of her followers, those invisible "little people," and these swarm through earhole and eyehole, and climb up without fear among the whirring machinery of the brain. They



spin cobwebs over the rattling wheels, and the pace slackens, and the noise grows fainter. They lay tiny hands upon the levers that guide thought, and as the place begins to grow quiet, they remind the tired mind that it is time for slumber, and carry it off to fairyland, leaving some of their number in the empty workshop, to cleanse, adjust, repair, and put all in good-going order again.

All night long the fairy-folk have Faust in their keeping, and every three hours the guard is changed, for different watches have different little people to oversee them.<sup>1</sup>

It is the twilight elves who sing him to sleep, but, as the hours pass and the quiet stars shine out, climbing slowly up the sky until they are mirrored in the lake below, their place is taken by the midnight fairies.

The midnight fairies sing drowsy songs of moonlight and starlight, so that the slumber may not be broken, and when their watch is over, they give place again to the little lithe grey folk who rule the twilight hours that come before the dawn.

These new nature-servants begin to sing more loudly ; it is no longer a lullaby ; it is a chant of prophecy and of hope. A new day is about to be born, before long—before very long. Time is sending another of his gifts, which, used wisely, may prove a boon undreamt of. And as they sing, the hours slip by and the wind rises—the dawn-wind, that little rippling breeze that is the avant-courier of the sun ; and the sky pales and then blushes at the knowledge that her lover is approaching.

As the elves sing on, the mist-wreaths, that have lain sleeping in the mountain-clefts all night long, begin to show signs of life and movement. They come out of their resting-places with slow, swaying movements, and half climb, half float, up the steep, rocky hill-sides to the summits, there to wait for union—re-absorption into the sun-god that gave them birth.

<sup>1</sup> There are four watches of the night—6-9, Seranada ; 9-12, Notturmo ; 12-3, Mattutino ; 3-6, Réveillé.

The song grows louder ; the pink flush in the sky deepens ; and the colours in the valley change from greys to greens ; while the mischievous little dawn-wind, having roused up the sleepy clouds, runs here and there, pulling the world by the ears to make it wake. He rings sudden chimes on the flower-bells, frightening the drowsy fairies curled up inside ; runs along the slopes, setting all the grasses nodding and whispering to each other ; and finally steals down to the quiet lake and ruffles even her peaceful solemnity.

Then the last watch of the passing night is taken by the real dawn-fairies—little iridescent, noisy people who make no pretence of slumber-songs, but come crowding out of the flowers where they spent the night, shouting at the tops of their voices, while the tiny grey elves scurry away to hide from the growing light.

The new guardians sing on, sing of strength, of achievement. Bid the sleeping soul rouse itself, for only the heavy, stupid crowd should be lying a-dreaming at this hour. Those noble souls who have vowed themselves to effort and achievement must be up and doing ; and then the little messengers end with a soft promise that such people by such consecration shall gain all and more than they have prayed for !

The end of the soft song is almost drowned by a tremendous tumult in the distant east, which announces the uprising of the sun. The golden god is still behind the barrier of the hills ; but the mountain-tops have seen him, and send down a colour-message to all whom it may concern below, and everything hastens to make ready for the miracle of new light, new life.

The air is suddenly filled with a whirring of wings ; the woods become clamorous and expectant. ARIEL, messenger of time, stands upon the hill-tops and affirms the news of the birth of another day and the near advent of the sun-god and his legions, so that those who have spirit-eyes and spirit-ears may turn to listen and behold.

## FAUST HEARS THE CRY—AND WAKES !

He wakes, just as nature has crowned herself with yellow light, and has strewn her green garments with dewy diamonds ; when the heights are ablaze with glory ; when the lake lies gleaming like a fire-opal below ; when the east is such a sea of molten gold that the sun *must* appear above the rocky barrier in another few moments.

He rises to his feet, nature's song still ringing in his ears, and the lesson of new birth lying as in a picture-book before his eyes. Gone is the night with its darkness and its impotence. Here is another day out of the blue. Fresh life, fresh strength, given for the purpose of further endeavour and progress !

He looks at the worn, scarred hills bathed in the morning beauty. If these patiently bear the shaping of the elements, the erosion of water and of wind, shall he be less patient to endure the shaping of fate ?

His eyes fall upon the flowers at his feet—the pink Alpine rose, the Mary-blue gentian, with their eager, serious faces turned upwards to the eastern sky, whose colours they have copied so perfectly. Shall he be less strenuous to fulfil his being than these ?

He listens to the manifold voices of the waking world about him—and *adds his own* !

Ah ! He who has ears to hear the dawn-message *cannot* be a laggard. Faust will toil on, toil ever, towards that unseen highest, and in so doing will be in league with the things of the field, and they shall help him.

And from over the edge of the rocky barrier comes the sun, as if to smile upon his promise of consecration !

## CHAPTER III

### COURT LIFE

*Scene 2. The Imperial Palace (February).—*In fulfilment of his vow, one would at first sight hardly have expected to find Faust half a year later in the midst of a gay, dissolute court, an office-holder in a decaying empire, rotten to its very foundations.

Mephisto has brought his *protégé* to be installed as chief magician to the Emperor, the Devil himself intending to supplant the present jester.

There is, however, method and wisdom in Faust's consent. He intends to reach those heights to which he has been caught up from time to time, and to dwell there permanently. But he has received sharp lessons that the summits are not to be gained as a dwelling-place by one sudden flight. Those who are caught up on the waxen wings of enthusiasm or emotion are not strong to stay. *Those who dwell there have walked up, climbed up step by step, putting one foot slowly and with difficulty before the other, and the strong wings which bear them from the hill-tops safely away into the blue seem to have grown somehow in the process of climbing!*

As Goethe puts it tersely elsewhere—

“Learn! ye who would journey to the Infinite,  
The way lies through the Finite that surrounds you.”

Court life is a thing of which Faust has had no experience, and when Mephisto wishes to fulfil his promise of

showing him the great world after they have seen the small, Faust consents to enter the new phase of existence for the purposes of study, using the Devil as the merest courier.

From what occurs later on, one would infer that Faust has spent the intervening months in studying the life of the people, and in realising very acutely the pernicious effects of the present system of government. He seems to have come to Court with a wish to teach as well as to see and learn, for we notice that he takes the first and every succeeding opportunity of pointing out to the good-natured, heedless Emperor—with a wisdom which must have been born of recent experience—the growing dangers of the times : warnings to which the courteous pleasure-seeker pays the usual amount of polite inattention.

We get our first glimpse of the Court on the eve of a great state council, and the scene is laid in the vast throne-room.

There is a blaze of light and a babel of sound. The huge hall is packed with a dense crowd of great people ; princes, nobles, barons, courtiers, of every degree, a glittering, shimmering mass of humanity ; for each man carries a fortune on his back, and many a one could sell his clothes for more than his acres.

Rich and poor alike are tricked out in lace, in velvet, in fine linen and gold broideries, till one cannot look at the human being, so dazzled are the eyes by the gorgeousness of his garments ; and when one would think that more luxury and ostentation *could* not be tacked on to one poor mortal body, a blare of trumpets announces the coming of the Emperor, and the great ruler of kings passes up the throne room with his suite, and their magnificence throws all else into the shade.

Riches seem to count for nothing in this fortunate realm ; splendour almost loses in effect for want of a foil. Everything glitters ! The men in armour at the entrance seem like figures of silver, such is the sheen and the beauty

of their finely wrought suits of mail. The courtiers of high rank are like statues of gold, such is the profusion of their ornaments, and such the quantity of their cloth of gold.

The hubbub occasioned by the entrance of the imperial train quiets down after a while. Another blast of trumpets commands silence, and the Emperor rises to open the council. He has a fine presence, a handsome young face, and a ringing voice, and as he stands surrounded by such pomp and clothed with such magnificence, he looks a fitting head for a great and wealthy empire.

"Greeting, my well-beloved and trusty friends, assembled here from far and wide to——"

There is a sudden stop. His Imperial Majesty's eyes, which have glanced carelessly enough over the throng of trusty subjects, have suddenly given him the information that there is a vacant place just at his left hand.

"Where's the jester?" asks the Emperor shortly.

A trembling page comes forward and makes obeisance, and explains stutteringly that the fool is dead—or perhaps only dead drunk—it is not quite sure which as yet.

The Emperor frowns! An uncomfortable pause ensues, during which the Court does not even venture to breathe. Suddenly there is a clash of arms at the entrance; a slim figure in scarlet and gold slips through the crossed lances of the guards and, crossing the room lightly and quickly, comes over to kneel before the irate ruler.

The newcomer (Mephisto, in the livery of a court jester) makes an absurdly exaggerated obeisance and promptly asks the Emperor a riddle!

"What is it that is chased away  
Yet longed for?

Exiled, under ban, condemned,  
Yet secretly desired?

What is it, at this moment, drawing near the throne?"

The Emperor looks at the new jester, and the new jester, not one whit disturbed, looks back at the Emperor with a queer twinkle in his eyes.

A profound and uncomfortable silence reigns again, everyone holding their breath, till His Imperial and Gracious Majesty suddenly bursts out laughing.

"Well! well! But this isn't the time for riddles," he says good-humouredly. "At least, these gentlemen here"—pointing to his ministers—"have got a bunch of riddles to ask us by and by; you'd better stay and answer them. My poor old fool, I am afraid, has gone on the long journey. There, stand back upon my left."

Peace is thus restored; the Court breathes again, and permits itself to echo the imperial laugh at the newcomer's audacity, and then in carefully modulated whispers to discuss the newcomer's appearance and probable character.

The last fool was the size of a tub. This one is as lean as a lath, and has an air of cunning that bodes ill; he may prove even a greater tyrant than his predecessor.

Evidently the court jester is feared as a person who has no mean share in the ruling of the land.

The Emperor takes up his broken speech—

"And thus, my trusty friends, welcome from far and near. We meet together in auspicious times, the stars are in our favour——"

(On the right of the Emperor stands the astrologer, next ruler-in-chief of the empire after the court fool.)

"—The stars are—in our favour. Therefore 'twould seem superfluous before to-night's rejoicings to vex our minds with grave affairs of state; but as you think it must be so, why, let's proceed."

His Imperial Majesty ends rather lamely, and sits down with a sigh and prepares himself to be profoundly bored, and thus the state council begins.

First the chancellor reads his speech—and now we turn to the other side of the medal!

The old man begins with ceremonious compliment, and ends with expressions of regret for the unpalatableness of his statements; but he tells the truth, and the whole truth, for all that.

*There is no justice in the land!* One man steals a horse, another a woman, a third even the jewelled crucifix from off the altar; and the criminals not only live unpunished, but may even boast serenely of their exploits, their security leading others to follow in their footsteps.

It is a long speech, and the old hands that hold the parchment tremble. The chancellor finishes amid silence, and then, turning more directly to the Emperor, says in a low voice: "If measures are not taken till all become oppressors or oppressed, the robber's hand—might—even—reach a crown!"

His imperial master moves uneasily, but he gives no comment, and after a moment signs for the next statement to commence.

The field-marshal is next in order, and a plain, bluff man comes forward. He is going to *say* his say, not to read anything. Parchment and compliments are not in his line, and he begins with the matter in hand at the first word.

The empire, he says, is one seething mass of insubordination and corruption; the difficulty is to know which part is worst. The townsmen, safe behind their walls, refuse to recognise anything but local authority and any laws but their own. The knights and nobles, safe in their castles on the hills, acknowledge no law at all, and make each fort a centre of highway robbery and violence. As for the army, it has become an undisciplined mob, and lives by plundering the people it should protect; but (and the soldier has enough excuse for his troops) what else could be expected? The men are not paid, not fed.

The field-marshal's voice is a wonder of strength, and reaches to the very end of the hall, and goes echoing to the courts outside; but it seems to be no more than his natural tone, and he is sublimely unconscious that he is roaring in the presence of majesty.

The Emperor reserves his reply, and signs for the next in order.

So the weary tale goes on and on, taken up by fresh



voices, until the great ruler signifies that he has heard as much as he is pleased to hear for that day.

His handsome face has grown sullen, and he turns fretfully to the new jester. "Hast not another woe to add to all that list?" he asks.

"I?" Mephisto smiles denial, and intimates that, basking in the dazzling light that floods the throne, he finds no room for sorrow or uneasiness—then, too, the stars are in their favour!

The Emperor's brow clears—of course that makes all the difference.

The Devil is emboldened by his success; he hints that perhaps one thing seems a little wanting. The field-marshal, the treasurer, and the steward, with other officials, complain of a dearth of money; this seems a pity, when there is so much treasure lying underground, ready to be dug up by anyone who will take the trouble to search for it.

*Hidden treasure!* The words have a magical effect upon his hearers. They make him suddenly a centre of universal attraction. Treasure! And to be had for the seeking! The thing sounds too wonderful to be true.

The bare word has changed the mental atmosphere as suddenly as those dangerous little squalls change the face of a placid mountain lake. Gone is the air of courteous boredom; gone the languid compliment and simpering smile; and a look of fierce greed and cruel cunning steals over the faces of the crowd.

They throng round Mephisto, elbowing and pushing each other, fighting their way to the front, till one is reminded of a pack of hungry, half-savage dogs quarrelling over their prey. Mephisto is commanded to tell his tale, and that quickly; and, to urge him to greater exertion, the Emperor vows to take a spade in hand at once if need be, and loudly promises to send the new jester straight to Hell if the tale prove untrue.

A lesser power of evil might well fear the storm thus

suddenly arisen about him, but Mephisto is in his element. It amuses him nearly as much as the Brocken scene, and he understands his audience, and has them well in hand. He has no intention, however, of beginning with a spade, either then or afterwards, and now proceeds to calm the ugly tempest he has raised.

He manages the greedy crowd with the art of a past-master. He promises, explains, gives the astrologer a meaning hint, and this worthy promptly enters into partnership with him, and reads the stars very much to his advantage. Then the Devil reluctantly confesses that a little delay is necessary; that he must have time for so great an adventure, and must also consult with his comrade, the great magician.

Time is grudgingly accorded to him, for all are eager for the "when," and only one has seemed curious as to the "how." The white-haired old chancellor has protested that this may be a hidden snare; has voiced a fear that there is something uncanny, unholy, about the proceeding. He is opposed to magic and magicians, and is a staunch churchman, bigoted, but earnest and sincere.

His weak protest, however, is drowned in the general consent. The Emperor rises and dissolves the council, passes once more down the hall with his magnificent suite; the Court follows, and Mephisto is left alone, looking after them with an evil smile.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE COURT CARNIVAL

THEN it is that the Devil seeks out Faust and gives a *résumé* of what has happened, telling probably just as much or just as little as will suit his purpose.

We are not given any account of their interview, but Faust consents to go to Court under the disguise of a magician, with the motives we have already noticed.

Mephisto and he now arrange a kind of symbolical carnival procession (Faust seems to be aware that the ruler will take no heed of any lesson except the pill be gilded), and the last scene of this play is to be the finding of the hidden treasure.

One can trace more or less the influence of both hands in the production which ensues. The main idea is certainly Faust's, for the main idea is purposeful and good. The play is to exhibit the progress of civilisation and to present in living picture-symbols the powers which advance or retard its onward march.<sup>1</sup>

The mask is to open with a dance and song, by groups of quite young girls dressed as flowers, and this scene is to symbolise the golden childhood of the world, the Arcadian agricultural era, when man lived at peace with his neighbour, and also with his younger brethren, the dumb creatures, being nourished only, but plentifully, by the "kindly fruits of the earth."

<sup>1</sup> I have used Miss Swanick's notes for the allegory of the carnival.

From this the scenes are to lead on by degrees to later and more conventional times.

The girls' song finished, groups of fishermen and bird-catchers intrude into Arcadia ; these pursue and try to win the young flower-maidens. Women become conventional and scheming ; the world passes on from the early and simple stages of life more and more rapidly.

A troop of noisy, uncouth hewers of wood enter boisterously, representatives of the beginning of manual labour. These are hardy, hulking creatures, proud of their strength in hacking down nature's leafy palaces, and mutilating the forest giants till they are fit for sacrifice for man.

We are already far away from the time when men only took gratefully what earth gave gladly.

The next groups to enter are still less attractive. Society is now definitely organised, and one by one the abuses of civilisation begin to appear, and these come before its benefits.

The stage is suddenly filled with a noisy crowd, with foolish human deformities, with greedy human parasites, and with semi-conscious drunkards. The vain fool, the uncontrolled man of pleasure, fill the place with their riot and songs.

Distinctly this young civilisation is passing through an unpleasant stage. It is in the heyday of a foolish youth.

Then comes yet another mood of pimply puberty—the morbid and prurient. This is spoken of, but not allowed to appear on the stage. [Would that the good example were more copied !]

After this there is a change. It is the end of a stage of life, the finish of an epoch. Civilisation has, as it were, attained its growth lengthways, and is now to fill out, to expand. The human race enters manhood, and begins to develop the qualities of maturity.

The next groups are the three Graces and the three Fates. The first represent the *refinements springing from civilised life* ; the second triad is intended to symbolise the

sway of law and order. This brings the world down to the epoch then existing, and is to end Part I. of the carnival story.

Part II. is to consist of separate symbolical groups, depicting various political truths, and the last scene is to be the finding of the ever-flowing fountain of liquid gold.

So the plan is drawn up by the strangely assorted pair ; the scenes are arranged for and no doubt carefully rehearsed, Mephisto probably acting as stage manager and supplying the stage accessories ; and the evening comes at last amidst great excitement.

The entertainment has every chance of becoming a great success. All the Court is present, and one of the largest halls in the Palace has been given up to the masqueraders.

The audience wait breathlessly row upon row in front of the heavy curtain that conceals one end of the hall ; the Emperor gives the signal, the curtain lifts, disclosing a forest scene, and the carnival story begins. Some score of the loveliest girls in the kingdom come forward for the opening song and dance. They are almost children, whose half-matured beauty has the fragrance of a half-opened white rosebud, and their appearance is the signal for a storm of applause.

The young Emperor is enchanted. The play goes on merrily. The herald, trained by Faust, stands at the side of the stage and fills in the pauses with explanatory verse.

The story continues to unroll without a hitch ; the woodcutters are duly boisterous ; the drunken man excites universal mirth ; the fair Graces and the three dark Fates are admired as perfect types of beauty ; but—alas for the symbolical teaching !—*no one pays the allegory the least attention !*

Mephisto, who ransacked the empire for beauty, foresaw and smiles. Faust, unpractical dreamer, seeking vaguely to teach and to help, has yet much to learn of the world and its ways.

Still the play goes on, with its surface of changing beauty, and its undercurrent of teaching and warning.

Part I. comes to an end amidst universal approbation. There is an interval, the stage is cleared, and Part II. commences with the entrance of a striking group representing an ideal kingdom. A great white elephant paces slowly across the stage before the eyes of the astonished crowd, who have never seen so huge a beast before. The living Colossus symbolises the state, and on his back, amidst gorgeous trappings, sits the goddess of activity—Victory. The great mild beast is led by a female figure, Prudence; while delusive Hope and despondent Fear are dragged captive in chains behind them.

The group halts in the centre of the stage, and each of the actors recites their part. Fear speaks tremblingly of the enemies always surrounding her. Hope counsels man to trust in everyone, and prophesies that, as all things work together for good, those shall prosper who take no trouble about them. Prudence says little about herself, but points to the enthroned goddess, and the burden of her song is that victory is only to be gained by persevering work.

All eyes are on the wondrous beast who stands patiently and obediently during the long recitations, and as obediently moves away when the signal is given, followed by the captives Hope and Fear. All tongues are occupied with the elephant; but Hope in chains has not achieved her mission, and none the less does the Emperor continue to put his trust in stars, conjurors, astrologers, and so on, till the day of his downfall.

The play hurries on to its close, through varied scenes. Presently Faust comes on in a triumphal car drawn by dragons, dressed as Plutus, god of wealth, while Mephisto as Avarice crouches in rags behind him.<sup>1</sup>

They pass on, and are followed by a crowd of fauns,

<sup>1</sup> I have omitted all mention of the boy-charioteer, as his is a character that would involve pages of explanation.

satyrs, gnomes, and nymphs, who announce the advent of the great god Pan ; and, amidst much tumult, in comes the Emperor in this disguise. He has wished to join in the masquerade, has insisted upon its being kept a secret, and is as amused as any child in watching the faces of the crowd through his mask, entering into the sport of the thing as light-heartedly and eagerly as a boy.

The attendant fauns, satyrs, and nymphs draw his rustic chariot into the centre of the platform, and begin wild songs and dances : advancing, retreating, surrounding, dispersing—using the chariot as a centre, as an altar for their rough devotions.

Then the dancers separate, falling back on each side in two long lines, and a crowd of curious little dwarfs come to the feet of the great god Pan to do homage. These little people who live in the depths of the earth make quaint salutations, and in thin, reedy voices sing their message. They tell of a strange spring, a wondrous little brook of liquid gold that has suddenly begun to bubble up from a cleft in the rock, and beg the god to allow them to conduct him to this new source of wealth.

The god descends from his rustic chariot ; the little people turn their backs upon the audience and run towards the back of the stage ; a painted curtain is suddenly drawn up, disclosing Plutus, god of wealth, standing on mimic rocks against a background of hills, while from a miniature cavern at his feet there trickles a slender thread of shining yellow water, or flame, or molten gold ! Which is it ?

The Emperor forgets that he is the god of nature, and remembers only that he is a bankrupt ruler, and strides quickly across the boards to the wonderful stream. After all, he thinks, it *might* be real, for the castle is built upon the living rock.

The current has increased in volume ; the yellow liquid comes bubbling up noisily from the cleft in the floor, widening the mouth of the hole with the pressure of its haste.

Pan stands and gazes at it, and Plutus watches the young eager face intently.

Is it molten gold?

The fiery current increases in strength. It is coming out now with a rush and a roar from a wide dark chasm, and the fiery spray is dashing up into the Emperor's face and scorching his hair and his beard.

Will he not take warning and bid that the flood may be controlled and stayed?

The fiery vapour is filtering into the hall below; the herald still recites his part, though he is now hidden by the yellow mist.

"O youth, O youth, and wilt thou never  
To joy assign its fitting bounds?  
O Majesty, with reason never  
Will thy omnipotence be crowned?"

Far from hearing the warning, the Emperor gazes at the miracle till he loses all restraint; he must see whence comes this yellow flood; he must know, cost what it may, if it be *real* gold!

He presses forward into the thick of the blinding spray, and, stooping down beside the rushing current, peers into the depths from which it bubbles up. The fire mist envelops him, and he passes abruptly from the realm of sense into a phantom world.

He seems to float in an ocean of dancing light, and to his dazzled senses he seems surrounded by a brilliant crowd of strange beings who dwell in this wondrous realm, and who come thronging forward to do him homage as he appears. They come eddying up from the depths on spiral flames, or floating down from the heights on slanting rays of light, and he is in the centre, and is king of them all.

It seems to him as if he spent years in this strange kingdom, for he imagines that it is only after long periods of time, during which much has happened which he can never fully remember, that he is recalled to the outer world by a sensation of extreme bodily pain.



The phantasmagoria has in reality only occupied a couple of minutes, just long enough for Mephisto to carry out his part of the scheme; just long enough to get the hypnotised Emperor to sign a parchment that is presented to him, while he imagines he is dictating royal decrees as King of the Salamanders.

These two minutes, however, are also long enough to have had a disastrous effect on the audience, for they have seen Pan throw away his mask, and their ruler sucked, as it were, into a gulf of fire, while the stage has suddenly become a mass of dancing flames.

The herald's voice still drones on, explaining that this catastrophe symbolises the vanity of imperial power and wealth, which, however brilliantly it may gleam for a while, soon flames to revolution, and sinks to dust and ashes; but his voice is drowned by the cries of the frightened crowd.

There is a universal panic!

Some call out that the Emperor is being burnt alive, and a few try to venture into the blinding, scorching spray, and run back screaming with pain. But most of those present make a wild rush for the doors, and a grim struggle ensues, in which the weakest are trampled down, women are thrust back, while strong men fight their way into the open air.

It is a scene of terror and disgrace, for the cowardice of this courtly crowd is even greater than its greed.

Just when the panic and confusion is at its height, a grey mist drops down from above, the flames vanish, the air clears. The panic-stricken crowd hesitate, waver, and look back. There stands the Emperor, alone upon an empty stage, flushed and dazed, but alive and apparently unhurt!

## CHAPTER V

### PHANTOM GOLD

THE after-effects of the carnival are various ! First and foremost, it may be noted that the young Emperor has thoroughly enjoyed himself, and intends to have more of these wonderful shows.

His ministers and his Court, however, do not quite share the imperial eagerness.

These men who played the coward (and so openly that no amount of explanation will get round the fact) naturally cherish bitter feelings towards the man who exposed this under-side of their nature ; and all the Court views with suspicion and distrust the fast-increasing influence of these chance-sent adventurers.

One fact, however, is sufficient to outweigh all these disadvantages and to keep the new jester and his comrade in high favour. *The newcomers have dowered the Court and country with untold wealth !* So greed, plus hope of more miracles, is enough to overcome suspicion and hate, for each man, while enjoying his present share of good things, has an eye on what may still be forthcoming.

The miracle of the finding of the treasure is but half accomplished, but its beneficial effects have already begun to be felt. Mephisto, having obtained the imperial signature on the previous night, hastily carries off the precious parchment to the primitive printing presses of those days, and it is duplicated and re-duplicated, till by the morning

light there are thousands of notes ready, which read as follows :—

“To all whom it concerneth be it known,  
Who owns this note, a thousand crowns doth own ;  
To him assured as certain pledge there lies  
Beneath the Emperor’s land a boundless prize.  
It is decreed this wealth without delay  
To raise, therewith the promised sum to pay.” (A. S.)

And here follows the imperial signature.

This sudden accession of wealth revives the sinking credit of the Court. Couriers are sent off in all directions to spread the new wealth. The commander-in-chief pays the arrears due to the soldiery, and gives them something in advance, with the result that a tremendous wave of loyalty surges over the land, and mutiny suddenly vanishes out of sight. The various allies all at once become very complaisant. The treasurer manages to balance his accounts ; the steward replenishes his wine-vaults ; the Jew is paid in full and the bonds torn up—everyone accepts the notes as equivalent to gold, and there is general rejoicing. Even the old chancellor is won over by the undoubted good that has been produced, and he now speaks of looking to a serene and untroubled old age.

All this has taken place in some eighteen hours ; it is quicker work paying debts under such circumstances than incurring them, a delightful reversal of the order of things.

Meantime His Imperial Majesty lies a-bed, sleeping off the effects of the previous night’s excitement and revelry, and it is not until noonday has passed that he is dressed, and saunters out into his pleasure-garden surrounded by the usual throng of servants and parasites, and summons Faust and the new jester to appear forthwith before him.

The news spreads rapidly that His Majesty is awake and ready to be approached, and close upon the heels of the jester and the magician come the grave ministers of state, each feverishly anxious to tell his own particular piece of good news.

The Emperor's first sentiment is one of troubled suspicion. He has as keen a brain as any of his subjects, if he would take the trouble to use it, and is, moreover, a young fellow of fine instinct and noble impulse, though these qualities are now so overlaid with the various follies of youth that few have suspected their existence.

He even attempts to stop the issue of the notes, and to have those which are already in circulation cancelled until he shall have time to inquire into the matter, for it is a thing touching his personal honour. He finds, however, that the whole Court is in league against him. His ministers are unanimous in declaring that such a proceeding would be in the highest degree unwise, if not by now absolutely impossible. The royal couriers ride fast, and the message was one which lent wings, while each village through which they pass will in its turn spread the good news.

Faust adds the weight of his opinion to the general advice. He again assures the Emperor that there is no manner of doubt about the treasure ; that in the dark days of misrule and terror, thousands of people hid their wealth in mother-earth, and fled trusting to return, and trusting in vain. The promise is one *most* easy to redeem.

The Emperor allows himself to be over-persuaded, and passes thus measurably nearer to the abyss.

No one present can foresee what is to happen in a few days, and Faust has as little idea as anyone that before the week is out he will be lying unconscious, lost to the outer world, and that when, after long travail, he wakes again, it will be in a realm cut off from all communication with, or indeed memory of, this lower earth.

So the Emperor takes him at his word, and gives the magician and the treasurer permission to leave the royal presence, that they may confer together, and make arrangements for the speedy appearance of the hidden gold.

When they are out of sight, he examines the new notes curiously, and then amuses himself with distributing them

amongst the throng of greedy parasites by which he is ever surrounded. He is wishful to see some of the renewed life and vigour which, his ministers inform him, this influx of money is spreading all over the empire, and as he presents each note he asks the recipient what use he intends to make of the gift.

The first man is going to spend the thousand crowns on himself; the second is going to waste it on his mistress. The third contemplates a cellar of choice wines. Another will return to the gambling room from which his penniless condition had banished him; and so on, and so on. Perhaps the best of the crowd is the small noble who is going to free his mortgaged lands, and set to work to beautify them.

The Emperor listens thoughtfully. "I should have thought new wealth had given impetus to deeds of daring, or other noble things till then not dreamt of, but all this treasure leaves you where you were," he ends bluntly.

It is a pity that Faust is not within earshot, for the small sentence would have gone far to console him for the neglected symbol-teaching of the carnival. The Emperor is beginning to think!

As it is Faust sees no good results for his labour, and begins already to feel very wearied of the false and artificial life which surrounds him, and to be infinitely saddened by the homage paid him by the treacherous, fawning crowd, from which it is so difficult to escape even for an hour.

As the days pass the feeling increases, for Faust is flattered and fêted to surfeit wherever he moves, is followed and courted, and *never* left alone!

The Emperor commands his constant attendance; some hours daily have to be passed with the treasurer that he may overlook the intricate accounts and gain some approximate idea of the sum to be raised; and the secrets of corruption and extortion disclosed by the long rows of figures are even more sickening than the sordid tale

written so clearly across the faces of the reverent crowd which pursues him every hour.

Faust is placed in such a position that he can probe this false life to its vilest depths, and if he chose could explore its supposed delights, but joys merely of the senses have long since outworn their power over him, and when the sights amid which he moves do not inspire disgust, they bring indifference. He is on the point of turning his back on all the glitter and the folly, but stays on to finish the matter of the treasure, and to fulfil another and more fateful promise ; *for never once does the Devil succeed in making his victim intentionally omit to fulfil his pledged word !*

## CHAPTER VI

### THE JOURNEY TO THE FORMLESS WORLD

ONCE more there is to be a break and a change in Faust's life—a change that shall involve not a mere alteration in the scenery, human and natural, that surrounds him, but again a movement of his consciousness to a different plane.

We had better pause for a moment to consider the constitution and composition of man, so as to thoroughly follow what is going to take place.

The many wise Ones have defined man as a reflection of the supreme Trinity, in that he also has three persons or sides to his nature. St Paul's definition of man, as body, soul, and spirit, will do for those who remember that "soul" is not immortal, immortality being an attribute only of the third portion.

We might put the thing in some detail as follows:—

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| I. The sensational or natural self : | BODY, including what one might call the passionate or emotional side. |
| II. The intellectual self (dual):    | SOUL, or concrete and abstract mind.                                  |
| III. The spiritual self :            | SPIRIT, one with its Creator and immortal.                            |

The above classification—merely the roughest idea of what the division may mean—will serve our purpose sufficiently, and enable us to follow with understanding the progress of Faust along the path of life.

Faust's rejuvenation, Chapter VII., Part I., was a return of his consciousness to the limitations of the sensational self to learn neglected lessons, and under Mephisto's guidance he has passed through all the range of emotions of which that vehicle is capable.

He has been given to eat and to drink, to win the fresh love of a maiden and to taste the stale allurements of the vile. Rank, wealth, and power have been added with a lavish hand. He enjoys the flattery of the entire Court, the favour of the Emperor. There is no more to aspire to.

In all these temptations he has succumbed to some, resisted others, *learnt from all*, and has paid his debt in full for his falls by the way.

Mephisto has really no more to offer ; he has slipped away from any power he once had, but henceforth continues blindly to lay before his pupil the same stale old things, the same outworn temptations, never seeming to realise that the man beside him has passed for ever from his grasp.

*Faust has outgrown the passional world.* These pleasures are to him now like the toys of childhood. He may use them to amuse and instruct other children, but they have no more attraction for him than a hoop or a ball has for a grown man. He is exercising no restraint in turning away when the pleasures of the lower world are offered to him. The sight of them merely arouses weariness.

The stage of weariness and indifference is heavy upon Faust now ; the break with that life has occurred, and though he is conscious of this, and restless to go out and seek the coming change which he feels to be impending, he seems uncertain of what it is that is coming and in what direction to turn to look for his new guide.

He remains at Court, however, for the while, held by the promises given to the Emperor ; and Mephisto is more than content with their present surroundings, and would keep him there for life if he could.

But Faust's eyes pass over the things present, restlessly



looking forward for what is to be. Mephisto is stationary ; the days for his leading and teaching is over ; the new teacher must be sought out, will not come down to the eager pupil, and there is a pause while Faust wonders at the next step and waits for a sign.

*The sign comes in unexpected fashion !* Strangely enough, it is the Emperor, whom Faust has looked down upon as a mere fool and an idle pleasure-seeker, who is yet destined to point out the hidden path which leads up the mountain side, and to urge Faust to tread in it.

It happens sometimes thus to our great surprise. A commonplace person who has been tolerated out of courtesy or pity, suddenly assumes the rôle of teacher, and with rough but shrewd common-sense, gives the dreamer's mind a much-needed shaking, bringing it back to the perception of every-day realities which were previously being passed by with closed eyes.

More often, however, it is only a chance word, dropping carelessly from the lips, which becomes to us the revelation for which we were dumbly waiting, and in this case our benefactors are often for ever unconscious of what they have done for us.

Perhaps they were but the instruments on which an unseen power played for a moment, so as to bring into effect what might otherwise have missed happening.

The Emperor's teaching belongs undoubtedly to the latter category. He has heard that Helen of Troy was the loveliest woman ever born into the world, and he sends for his new magician and commands him to summon her from the shades to afford him and the Court an evening's amusement.

Not even when the key is thus put into his hand does Faust realise what door it will unlock, and it is not till he confers with Mephisto and vainly bids *him* bring forth what the Emperor desires, that he gets an inkling of what it may cost of personal effort to keep the lightly given promise.

Helena is Queen of Beauty, dweller in the distant land of the Ideal. She is to be the teacher and guide for the next stage of Faust's life-journey, but she cannot be summoned by any arts that Mephisto, the spirit of negation, has at his command, and the Devil says angrily—

"It was a reckless, nay, a mad promise."

Faust watches this outburst of temper with an amused and incredulous smile. He is invariably courteous and tolerant now to his strange companion, having climbed so far above him that fear or anger can no longer enter into their relationships. It is Mephisto now who loses self-control at times, and dashes impotently against the barrier of Faust's quiet reserve, courtly manner, and polished irony. We have to turn back to the opening scenes of the drama to realise how thoroughly the two have changed places.

Mephisto rages. Faust quietly persists.

"You seem to think no sooner said than done," ejaculates the Devil petulantly. "I tell you, here's a matter of more difficulty than you have dreamt of. You cannot call Helena up like any devil's light o' love. Such as Helena live in other kingdoms."

"Father of hindrances," murmurs the man, "we are persuaded that a murmured incantation would produce her on the spot without delay."

Mephisto explodes anew. "These heathen folk have their own hells, I tell you," he says coarsely, "and I have naught to do with them." Then, as Faust does not take the trouble to reply, but stands waiting, he adds: "Of course there *is* a way——"

"Speak quickly," commands the other.

The Devil shrugs his shoulders at the tone of voice. "We do not willingly reveal the deeper secrets."

Not a word to help him on, so he proceeds reluctantly—

"In emptiness and isolation, throned in a realm where there is neither time nor space, are goddesses—we name them not without misgiving—they are the MOTHERS."

"The mothers!" echoes Faust. The name vibrates downwards through his being, stirring dark, silent depths into troubled consciousness. Something within him awakes to sudden life, and its quick breathing throws all about it into tumult. The central storm spreads outwards, following the way the message came, till in the world of effects it results in a violent shivering fit of the body.

"Why are you trembling?" asks Mephisto patronisingly.

A breath from those distant regions does not set him quivering.

"The name is strange," says the man hoarsely—"strange!"

"Strange indeed, but then 'tis not my fault that you must journey to the depths to see them."

Faust controls himself with an effort. "The way?"

"The way! There is no way to the untrodden. Art ready? There are no bolts to force, no locks to open. Thou wilt be buffeted by solitude, and ringed about with emptiness. Canst thou imagine it? Hast ever lived in solitary places?"

"Mayst spare thyself such speeches. Hast thou forgotten how, in times long past, my task was still to study emptiness, and more, to teach it?" asks the quondam philosopher.

Times long past indeed, for after that age came youth, and youth has now grown to manhood again.

"And further, when fate overwhelmed me, I fled to such dire solitude that I welcomed even the Devil for a companion. Hast thou forgotten?"

Faust's tone is bitter, but his words are light, and leave no broken surface of emotion, which would catch a taunt or a repartee. Faust's chief sorrow seems to be for the Devil's failing memory; but he is speaking of the isolation and the torment of Hell.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word Hell in Old English meaning to build a wall round to separate. To be "Helled" is to be shut out from.

Isolation is Hell. Union is Heaven.—R. W. Trine.

Mephisto glances at him, and decides to take the remark seriously, and to ignore the suspicion of levity.

Those places, he says, had at least *something* tangible about them; earth's loneliest spot has sun, moon, stars, and solid ground or water; but in this land where he would venture there is nothing, nothing—but a blank. In all its kingdoms there is no foothold, "nothing stable whereon a man can rest."

Does it not sound wearisomely familiar, this description of the ideal world; each commonplace person uses almost the same words when warning the enthusiast not to venture.

But in that distant land, where the ruler of the senses finds no rest for the sole of his foot, where the Spirit of Negation sees naught, hears naught, Faust foresees, foreknows that a new world lies waiting to reveal itself to that strange new life so lately born within him.

He does not take the trouble to explain much of all this, but demands how he may reach that distant coast.

Mephisto wastes some more time in pity and good advice; he is sorry for the dreamer who insists upon venturing on so perilous an undertaking for the sake of reaching vacuity, but he is finally compelled into obedience and reluctantly gives the initial directions.

Faust is given a small dull key which flashes and grows as it lies within his hand. He is then told to concentrate his mind in a supreme effort to escape from the world of form into the formless world behind it—merely to *will* strongly to escape!

The man does not hesitate; he stands erect, closes his eyes, and in a moment has vanished from this lower sphere, leaving Mephisto surprised at the abruptness of his success, and wondering cynically if he will ever succeed in a return.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ADVENT OF HELENA

SUCH is the outline of the fifth scene ; now for its deeper meaning.

Who are those goddesses "enthroned in solitude," whose bare name sets the thinker quivering?

Who are those strange primeval beings, so far above conditioned life that for them exists neither time nor space?

We can but so faintly realise what this must mean.

No time for them ! Because about them lies the picture-record of all that was, that is, that shall be. They have it as a whole, while for us the panorama drifts past brokenly and slowly in patches.

No space ! Their consciousness is everywhere at every moment, so that nearness and distance cease to exist : space is inoperative.

We can only follow with vaguest dreams a life lived among such absence of all boundaries. Wisely has Goethe put the description of these infinite powers into the mouth of the Spirit of Negation, for only by repeated negatives can we gain our nearest conception of these rulers of the formless world.<sup>1</sup>

But though negative to us, because our dim eyes cannot bear to search out their radiance and can but apprehend the shadow that they cast, they are on the positive or spirit-side of existence.

<sup>1</sup> I think it is in one of the Upanishads that it is written that we can only describe God by saying "No, no."

They are the symbols which Goethe has chosen to represent the *third*<sup>1</sup> aspect of the God within us—CREATIVE WISDOM—and he has pictured them as feminine, because there in the formless realm they mould the ideas or archetypes after the pattern of which the forms shall be built in the lower world.

They are the MOTHERS OF THE PHENOMENAL. Creative wisdom *behind* manifestation, as nature is creative wisdom *in* manifestation (Part I., Chapter X.).

They dwell indeed far beyond or behind our work-a-day world, and yet no great work is done except under their guidance; but it is no easy, no safe task to attempt to reach them.

Mephisto, materially-minded, practical, common-sense, despises his companion for running into such peril to reach what to him is a blank.

He knows that of those who attempt the enterprise some do not return; and of those who come again, it is noticed that they often lack something; that the terrible void has distorted them, spoilt the delicate poise of the intellect, robbed them of those balance-wheels of mind; and that for ever after such pilgrims walk our streets or pace our fields with an unequal, unsteady step. It seems almost as if part of them were still wandering in that strange region betwixt heaven and earth. To use an Italian idiom for fainting that is pregnant with meaning—they have “become less.”

Because of this danger, it is perhaps best that the crowd should be so content to take all information about eternal things from hearsay. And it is perhaps natural that, as so few can accomplish the feat, the general voice should, after a time, have proclaimed such a journey into the heart of things impious or IMPOSSIBLE!

Faust has the commonplace view laid before him most

<sup>1</sup> The Trinity which all religions teach as being above us, and reflected within us—1. Power, the unmanifest; 2. Love, the helper; 3. Wisdom, the Creator.

vividly by Mephisto, but such reasoning does not affect his decision to make the attempt.

What one or more have done, another may do again ! He has had enough of evidence which has been handled by generations of restless fingers till it is twisted out of all sensible shape. He has had enough of sacred parchments, commented upon and re-edited out of all meaning. He will EXPERIMENT for himself in the mental world, the world of the Ideal, as he experimented in the world of sensation, the world of the phenomenal ; and something within him whispers that he will reach the heart of things and will return.

Now, as to the manner of his going. What are the necessary preparations for the journey ? What qualifications are essential to make it possible ?

As the adventure is not possible for the ordinary man, we must expect to find qualifications that are not demanded by ordinary life.

The first possession might be summed up in that word of wide meaning—PURITY. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Or, as another Eastern scripture puts it : "Only with him whose senses are not swayed by things of sense, . . . shows wisdom perfect. What is midnight gloom to unenlightened souls shines wakeful day to his clear gaze." Or again : "Whoso hath laid aside desire and fear, sees in the quiet light of verity, eternal, safe, majestic, his soul !"

The sacred writings are full of the value of this possession "Purity," which implies complete mastery of the senses and growing control over other things.

We have watched Faust acquire, painfully and laboriously, this qualification ; and when Mephisto tells him that the first step in seeking the formless world is ABSTRACTION (the turning away from the world of form), the process is a simple one to the mind that has long ago wearied of the puppet-show, of its dust and noise and glare, and has no more left to learn from its varied scenes as participator.

(Faust yet returns to learn much as creator or manipulator of such scenes.)

The second step is CONCENTRATION, which implies a will trained to obey its master, till it is a force which can be steadily directed towards one particular point, and then impelled with the swiftness of an arrow in the direction desired. This Faust can accomplish sometimes by a supreme effort, but he has still much to learn through experience and suffering on this point.

There is yet a third thing, unnamed, but symbolised by the small dull key which Mephisto gives his pupil, and which the latter no sooner handles than it flashes and grows in his hand till it becomes a shining light, a lamp to his feet. This it is which is to guide him to the Mothers, and at the heart of things there is a glowing tripod, by the light of which he will behold them. Faust must touch the tripod with the key of power, and at this touch he will be suddenly once again in the outer world, *having accomplished his design!*

But we are never told what the key and the tripod mean, what they are. Perhaps lest we might have the folly to seek for them before we had gained the first two qualifications necessary for the journey.

. . . . .

So Faust disappears from what we call the "real" world, and Mephisto is left to wonder cynically if he will ever return, and to go on making preparations for the night's revels with practical indifference as to whether he does, or does not.

The Devil is in his element among the courtiers. It is or him the keenest pleasure to detect their secret vices and play up to them; to lavish favours which will increase their unsightly sins; to add more beauty to a vain and cruel coquette; to give increased wealth to a man who is a centre of corruption, and whose power for evil depends largely upon his money.



Mephisto does not improve upon acquaintance! At first sight there was something attractive about him. His finished manner, his clever repartee, contrasted well with the awkwardness of the old philosopher. For a while we were tempted to think that wit and malice were inseparable; but Faust, with experience of the world (still minus the malice) has developed the wit and the manner; he has become to all outward appearance a man of the world, and is now as much at home and as free from gaucherie among the brilliant imperial following as he was among the merrymaking peasants.

But beneath this polished surface manner which both have now in common, if you probe deeper in Mephisto you come upon nothing but loathsome rottenness; while, if you have the power to penetrate to Faust's secret self and are allowed to look behind that polished courtesy or sparkling wit wherewith he shields himself from observation, you find the man that you can respect, a being deep-rooted, thoughtful, compassionate.

So Mephisto goes on with the preparations for the night's entertainment, telling everyone that his companion has gone away for a while to make some necessary arrangements.

And night falls at last, and the Court assembles once more in the large hall which is dimly lit by torches—light was not a strong feature of the Middle Ages.

The crowd settles down amid much whispering and rustling, and all gaze with curiosity at the heavy dark curtain which completely shrouds the stage from view.

Some remember the last entertainment, and would as soon have stayed away; but a courtier has little liberty of action, whatever other favour he may obtain, and if the Emperor attends, he attends also, and must smile through it too.

The herald rises and announces that, as the scene to-night is to be one framed by magic art, and the actors will be thin shades or spirits, the astrologer will take

his usual part, and will explain the scenes as they proceed.

This worthy, therefore, with his long face and his long cloak, takes up the herald's position. Mephisto seats himself in the prompter's box, from which, unseen, he can give the necessary hints.

So far, so good ; but where is Faust ?

Mephisto wonders how long the audience will remain patient ; the astrologer wonders what part he may have to play before all is finished, for he has been told little or nothing, except to watch Mephisto's face ; and the audience gape and wonder what is behind the dark curtain.

The astrologer begins his tale, the set speech at the beginning prepared for him, and, perhaps, somewhat to his surprise, as he speaks the lines, the scene follows his description. At his opening word there is a sudden blaze of light on the stage, and the heavy curtain shrivels away as if burnt up, *and at the end of the dim hall it is as if someone had opened a window into the sunlight !*

The first impression is of nothing but dazzling light, but as the eyes grow accustomed to the splendour, we see that there is a picture, a living picture. It is a scene of ancient Greece brought back to life !

In the foreground there is a massive white marble temple, its pillars gleaming in the sunlight ; behind it is the dancing sea, and the green, rounded hills.

The light sparkles on the lively little waves ; the fluffy white cloudlets drift across the deep blue vault, and dissolve into the ether ; the caressing wind sweeps over the grass in front of the temple, and sets the flowers nodding—it is a lovely representation of the laughing, sunny beauty of nature ; while the massive temple with its strong pillars and their delicately carved capitals, its wondrous bas-reliefs and statues, is a monument bearing testimony to the beauty and strength of the mind of man.

The magic show is marvellous ; the illusion is perfect ; the scene *lives* before the eyes.

The audience gape and stare! It is too much of a contrast from their grim sea-coast, their grey fortresses and sombre cathedrals. The light hurts their eyes; the gaiety is against their ideas of religion; the statues offend their prurient ideas of propriety; and at length one man expresses the general opinion. (It is the Emperor's architect.) "*That the antique!*" he mutters. "*Well, I think it is both clumsy and coarse!*" Those heavy pillars are a poor substitute for our slender shafts."

From a small crack or crevice in front of the temple a light mist begins to curl upwards. The rift widens; the fumes thicken a little; and by and by we see a figure rising out of mother-earth, facing the temple.

The silent figure is almost hidden for a while by the mist-wreaths, but these clear away and we see standing there a white-robed priest, and beside him there is a golden tripod on which incense is burning and sending perfumed rings of delicate bluish smoke into the sunlit air.

*It is Faust, who has returned, still in the robes of his initiation, still unconscious of and untouched by the world which now surrounds him.*

He stands gazing at the temple and the mountains and the sea, then slowly stretches out a hand holding a flashing key, touches the tripod with it, and chants a long, low, rhythmic invocation.

At the touch the incense sends out a great white cloud which waves backwards and forwards in the breeze like a gossamer curtain, and gives out a sound like the soft ringing of very distant bells; then *everything* answers to the music: the temple sends out a deep resonant chord, the hills strengthen the sound with a strong bass note, the cloudlets and the wavelets add their laughing voices, till the whole scene is vibrating with light sound and colour, one seemingly merging into the other, being in some way (mysterious and unknown to earth) interchangeable, and all things join in a common hymn of praise.

The gossamer curtain breaks away from the tripod, and floats backwards till it touches the temple steps, and then divides to let a fair youth step from between its folds, and drifts back and back, leaving the boy on the grass below, gazing about him wonderingly.

He throws himself down on the flower-strewn grass, and after a while seems to tire of the light and the strong fragrance and to close his eyes in sleep.

The gossamer curtain has drifted slowly up the temple stairs, hiding our view of the central altar which we first saw through the open portal. It lingers about the entrance to the shrine, amidst the slender shadows of the pillars; but when at length it breaks and drifts into the sacred precincts, another figure is disclosed to view.

*It is Helena!*

She stands at the head of the temple steps, gazing in front of her, with parted lips and wondering eyes—and stands thus motionless for several moments.

Perfect example of a perfect type of beauty! The heaven-gifted sculptors of those days have left fragments from which we can reconstruct in imagination Helen the fair, the ideal woman. We are familiar with the perfect outlines that were revealed rather than hidden by the simple white garment worn by the women of those days, which left the arms and neck bare to the caressing wind, and left the body so unrestrained that each movement was one of grace.

*Divinely beautiful because divinely natural, Helen stands and faces the mediæval audience, and the women without one exception condemn her.*

No one can deny, they whisper, that her face has a certain "prettiness," but the rest is shocking! Those broad bare feet, more fit for a day among the hills than for a lady's garden, and certainly an impossible size to adorn a court slipper.

That large waist, what *would* it look like in a fashionable dress? Each woman in the audience looks complacently

down at her own iron-bound figure, tapering away in the middle to as fine a circle as nature will permit her to bear and live, shakes out her flounces, moves her thin white hands so as to show the rings with which they are laden, has a hurried look at a little mirror that is always carried, to make sure that powder and rouge are still in a proper state, thanks God that she is not a blousy creature like that, and begins to discuss Helen's past life with her neighbour !

Meantime the phantom beauty sees Paris asleep among the flowers and begins to move down the steps towards him.

*And what of Faust?* He has stood silent and motionless, gazing at her divine loveliness, at the revelation that has been granted to him. This is the goddess for whom he has been waiting, and as she moves he stretches out his arms to her and speaks to her in burning words.

The phantom pays no heed, and Mephisto calls out sharply from the prompter's box to Faust to come to his senses and remember where he is.

The magic scene goes on uninterrupted. Helen comes gently down to the sleeping Paris, and, bending over him, wakes him with a kiss. Paris springs up and clasps her in his arms, and at this Faust, deaf to all warning, frees himself from Mephisto's hand clutching at his robes. "He has seen his ideal ; his joy, his yearning rise to a burning desire, to a resolution that is so powerful that nothing can intimidate it," and he rushes into the magic scene, strikes away the Greek lover, and clasps the phantom goddess in his arms, only to find himself clasping the vacant air, and to fall stricken senseless and lie as one dead.<sup>1</sup>

A loud report as of thunder fills the hall, the magic scene vanishes, leaving only tumult and darkness behind.

<sup>1</sup> Bayard Taylor's notes.

The attempt to reach suddenly what can only be reached as a permanent possession after long effort has failed as it failed before ; but now the results are to be more disastrous, for as Mephisto takes advantage of the darkness to bear away the senseless man, he wonders, and with good reason, if there exists any means of restoring consciousness to one thus paralysed.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE OLD CELL

WITH the last scene, Act I. came to a close, and we may take advantage of the time when the curtain would be down to reflect a little upon the rapid changes which led up to the disastrous finale.

From that scene where Mephisto grudgingly gave Faust the instructions for escaping from the world of form, to the climax when the man falls senseless, after a vain attempt to grasp the phantom loveliness, but a few hours have passed, as men count time.

Time and space, however, are inoperative in that new world which Faust risked all to enter; and what was to the Court a tedious afternoon, was to him a lifetime of growth and experience.

Practically no attempt is made in the poem to describe that journey, or to portray the limitless world which Faust visited; we have only hints and half-lines given us, and must build on these as best we can.

We know that the ideal realm (the mind or soul-world some may prefer to call it) stretches so far above, behind, and beyond all that we can sensate, that to us it is limitless.

We know also that it is, to use a familiar phrase, a "place of many mansions."

We see, too, that its uttermost touches the Godhead, is infinite, universal, and divine, and we feel, perhaps, that its lower regions are just reachable for some of us from mother-earth.

It is not unlike a ladder between earth and heaven, this vast mental world with its many steps. On its heights are the terrible Goddess-Mothers; but nearer us the inhabitants are what one might call semi-gods. They are slightly akin to humanity, are to be gained sight of and spoken to after much honest striving.

All men who do any real work—work that is not merely copying or commentary—must, at least, touch these lower Elysian fields; but the great teachers are impelled to the very innermost, right down to the glowing tripod and the Mothers. Only thus shall they become teachers: by right of KNOWING! Not by thinking, or believing, or reading, but by divine right of knowing more than those they would teach.

Faust reaches that fiery centre, but he is not strong to stay in it, and so passes from thence to the “lower mansion” most appropriate to his development and to his future task.

Living there, he creates his own soul-world ARCADIA, woos and wins his ideal and weds her (in the mystical meaning of the word wedding), and this visionary life of years is the dream-side of the creative intellect.

The tale of his wedding is told in Act III. Act II. is the story of the search for Helena. He has temporarily lost her through wishing to possess her too quickly.

We have seen the qualifications required to reach the Mothers and how the man fulfilled these and beheld the vision; but other tasks are before him ere he may possess and make his own an angel from the planes of the ideal.

BESIDE THE DREAM-SIDE, THERE IS THE DRUDGERY-SIDE OF CREATIVE INTELLECT.

As well as meditation (which was perhaps that glowing key which led him to the Mothers) there must be action, work!

A boy dreaming in the fields at sunset and watching that great master-painter, the sun, at work upon the clouds



may, in that moment, have seen his ideal, have recognised his angel ; but years of weary work with pencil and brush are before him ere he shall possess her.

A child listening to the great cathedral organ in the twilight may, in that moment, have beheld Cecilia and known her for his star ; but the scales and exercises and dry pages of the rules of harmony are in front of him for all that.

Now the Mothers who prompted Faust's prayer and called him to their dwelling, gave him first of all (since he was strong enough) sight of the heart of things on the universal plane, and then granted a vision of that power (incarnated or symbolised as Helen) which would most help to fit him for his future task.

Now, having seen Helena, he must work for her. He must go to the regions of antiquity and slowly, carefully, follow the traces of her footsteps till he shall find her ; or, in plain language, must turn to the fragments that remain of Greek art, science, and literature, and work up from these to that ideal beauty which that age had sight of and put into everything that it touched, and which this age has cast on one side and has forgotten.

Helen is a complex being not easy to win. She is queen of beauty, symbol of that subtle power that transforms all it touches. Able to work along many, indeed along all lines ; further back, nearer the divine, than the more human or concrete powers, the angels of music, poetry, or colour. She is nearer the abstract than they are, and is a channel through which the divine flows to them, and to many others. She is a *very* great power not far from the fiery centre ; but Faust has a gigantic task in front of him, and will need all the help and inspiration and teaching that he is strong enough to receive.

Natural beauty is indeed *peculiarly* fitted to help him in his future work ; but we will leave the story as it unfolds to tell of that, and will now turn back to the search for Helen, Act II., and take up our tale where we dropped it,

when Mephisto, under cover of darkness, carried away the unconscious man from the Emperor's palace.

. . . . .

Mephisto has a good supply of common-sense—a useful quality. He has, however, *no* imagination, another useful quality, and one which is seldom given its due meed of praise.

A controlled imagination is of more practical value than most worthy people would be willing to allow. Imagination is prophecy, sight at a distance, sight in the dark, thought-reading, and many other things, and without imagination there can be no sympathy.

Sympathy is almost entirely dependent upon the power of imagining (picturing, not making up) the other person's views and feelings, and in the present case Mephisto's utter helplessness arises from his absolute inability to perceive what is taking place in Faust's mind.

The swoon has given place to deep sleep. Faust sleeps, and dreams too—one can tell that from his restlessness ; but it is still a sleep that cannot be broken, and here Mephisto's knowledge of the conditions ends.

For want of a more original idea, he at length takes the unconscious man back to the old dusty cell in the town where he once lived, and where Gretchen died. The Devil forces open the rotten door without difficulty, and finding everything within just as it was left years ago, he deposits his senseless burden on the hard couch, and is at his wits' end what to do next.

The Devil is at the end of his resources.

“Lie there, thou luckless man ; for those whom Helen's arts have paralysed come not so quickly back to reason.”

He drops the moth-eaten curtain over the bed and turns to view the room. It is certainly gratifying to see his prophecy so soon fulfilled ; to behold the reckless fool lying smitten senseless by the power that he *would* brave all to win in spite of good warning ; but it would be most annoy-

ing were this unconsciousness of outward things to prove permanent.

What temptation can you offer to a sleeping man? The trance may last a lifetime, and the sleeping soul dream itself through the gates of heaven, and then what about the wager?

Mephisto turns his attention to the old cell. It is quite unchanged, save that it is darker and dirtier than before, for someone has left the things scrupulously untouched and uncleaned. There is the very pen with which the compact was signed years ago, lying by the same large inkhorn—no one has moved them. Moths and dust have had the place between them since that fatal day. The windows practically admit no light at all now, so begrimed are they with the dirt of years. The parchments on the shelves and on the floor are literally dust-heaps; were you to try and take up any book, it would crumble to pieces in your hands.

The Devil smiles at this rubbish hole that was once Faust's world. He takes down the professorial mantle from where it hangs mouldering, and, throwing the moth-eaten fur round his shoulders to hide the striking Court uniform, he strides across the room and gives a vigorous tug at the disused bell-rope.

The peal echoes through the ruined place, making the house literally quiver; and the dread summons is answered quickly by a scared old man in the dress of a student, who comes tottering down the long dark corridor, and stands holding on to the door, and blinking at the newcomer in evident alarm. There is something very terrifying in the sudden apparition of this tall, forbidding-looking stranger, who seems so thoroughly at home in the long-forsaken room.

As the old man stands gaping there in the dim light, we are irresistibly reminded of the "earthworm," and might think it was our old friend grown grey; but it is not Wagner. The character-writing on the face is the same, but the features are different.

"Come hither, friend," says the sinister stranger in a pleasant tone. "Your name is Nicodemus?"

"Illustrious sir, such is my name. Oremus, let us pray."

"Ah, well," says Mephisto drily, "we'll omit that." He goes on to explain his errand without further delay. He wishes to see the famous Dr Wagner, said to be the most learned of living men since Faustus left the world.

The old Famulus catches up the name. Wagner, it appears, is still sorrowing over the mysterious disappearance of his old master, and the room has been left untouched in the hope that the owner will some day return as suddenly as he left.

Wagner must have strong natural affections, which all his pedantry and learning have not yet been able to completely eradicate, to remember his master for all these years, and to wish for a return which would immediately relegate him to a secondary position among the surrounding students.

The old Famulus fishes for news about the details of the newcomer's errand, but he gets no information beyond the fact that the stranger wishes to see the great Dr Wagner, and at once!

This is impossible, says the Famulus; the great man is engaged on some mysterious and super-important experiment, and must by *no* means be disturbed.

Mephisto soon quells this slight show of opposition to his wishes, and, torn between two fears, the old Famulus at last consents to show him into the laboratory.

## CHAPTER IX

### A GUIDE APPEARS

THE little laboratory is not far to seek, leading as it does out of Faust's cell and bedroom ; it is incredibly small, being little more than a stone box with a stove at one end of it.

It is insufferably hot and dark and smelly ; but Wagner, dirty and perspiring, gazing ever into the glowing depths of his furnace, has no consciousness of discomfort or any thought for anything outside the fateful experiment.

The untidiness and litter is appalling : books, bottles, retorts, packets of powder, spilt liquid, stale food which the great man has forgotten to eat. There is not an inch of uncovered board or table.

Wagner jumps nervously as Mephisto rattles at the door, and when the stranger further walks in without invitation, the experimenter is too preoccupied to be angry at the intrusion, and merely bids the newcomer walk softly, without so much as glancing round to see who it is.

"What is it ?" asks the Devil in a whisper.

"A man is being made," replies the other in an undertone.

"What loving couple live within this den ?"

"Nay, God forbid !" replies Wagner, unconsciously raising his voice. "'Tis thus the brute creation comes to life. I am devising a much purer origin for future man."

He goes on carefully stirring the precious ingredients

which the huge cauldron contains, and explains to the listening Devil the novel features of the experiment.

Mephisto's expression is worth seeing as he watches this withered student who proposes to supersede nature's ways in springtime; but luckily he is standing in the shadow, and Wagner too is preoccupied.

The artificial and the unnatural have reached their extreme limit; if the experiment succeeds it will be the apotheosis of *Un-natur gegen Ulr-natur*.

Time flies; the cauldron ceases to bubble; the low hum dies away; the mixture is beginning to curdle, and in the centre a nucleus is forming.

Wagner watches with bated breath, and allows the furnace to cool a little.

The curdling mass thickens and the nucleus takes on an oval shape, and grows hard, and, stranger still, slightly luminous.

Time still passes. Mephisto is getting tired; Wagner is still in the seventh heaven; the furnace has been allowed to go out, but the cauldron is still watched intently.

The luminous egg has grown in size, in luminosity. It is not turning out quite what was expected—but never mind.

It becomes transparent; one can see that something is moving within, and after more anxious delay the outer surface clears so that one can see completely, and lo! the luminous egg holds a very tiny but very perfect human form.

Wagner is convinced that the crowning work of humanity is accomplished; he waits a little longer, and then carefully lifts out his creation and holds it up for the Devil to admire!

. . . . .

Now no two commentators have been able to agree upon the meaning of this strange little human being imprisoned in what looks like a glass egg; and yet he

plays so important a part in the following act that we ought to know all about him. This much we see, the strange, luminous little being is a spiritual entity, an IDEA imprisoned and confined by the transparent case ; limited, cut off from his peers so as to be able to manifest and work. The Homunculus is no embryo human being, as Wagner fondly imagines. Should the glass prison break (as it ultimately does), the idea will lose the acquired shape, and, dissolving into light, will return to that ocean of life from whence it came.

What was the idea that was thus imprisoned in form for a while? We are not told.

The work it wrought is easier to follow.

As the flickering light of the will-of-the-wisp led Faust up the Brocken to the carnival of evil, so this steady spirit-light is to lead the man to a nobler scene, to the graceful festival of the Classical Walpurgis Night.

This is a sort of mythological All Souls Day : a night when the strange forms of that wondrous past are again endowed with life, and, meeting upon the plains of Greece, spend one night in graceful merrymaking and revelry.

The Homunculus is to guide Faust through the air to Greek soil, and then will leave him there to continue his search for Helen. He seems to be a "transitional" idea, if one may use the word in that sense.

Incidentally, too, he teaches Faust the necessity of absolute concentration for the production of any great work. Indeed, so strongly marked is this attribute of his, that one critic has taken Homunculus as the symbol of concentration or of concentrated activity.

*Go abroad to learn ; stay at home to achieve !*

To learn you must expand—expand to the comprehension of the universe if you can ; the sweep could not be too great. But when from learning you wish to turn to producing, you must limit yourself at once.

CREATION MUST ALWAYS BE ACCOMPANIED BY CIRCUMSCRIPTION.

You must draw a sheath over your soul-sphere. Must check all the out-going energies, and double in upon yourself to feed what is coming to life at the centre. This process must continue, too, for all the months of the bearing of the unborn, and not until the child is brought to birth, and is to a certain extent a self-dependent entity, can you turn round and let the life-giving forces flow outward once more, and can you become what worthy people call "really useful."

As it has been wisely and tersely put: "The world for the training of the novice; the hermitage for the development of the saint."

This necessary period of retirement and isolation is woefully misunderstood. The temporary disgust with life which drives a man into the wilderness has given rise to many a cheap sneer. "This, then, is the beginning of their cant about brotherhood, is it? A fleeing away from their fellow-creature that they have talked so much about helping. What, cannot they work amongst the noise and the dust of the town as the rest of us do?"

Why not? Who knows? We can but answer that it is the law that things need silence and darkness at a certain period of their growth. That imperious desire for isolation does not come from any idea of fancied superiority. It is not the withdrawing to a hill-top in order to be able to look down on those below. Still less is it the snobbish exclusiveness which lures its victim to keep clear of the "vulgar herd." It is the withdrawing of an advanced student who is being trained to be a teacher and a leader of men, the sheltering of one who is to come forth later as the creator of a new era; and the unborn thought which he carries *must* take shape and form in solitude.

Faust is still in the stage of learning, is still going outward in all directions in search of experience; but the time of his productiveness is at hand, and *Homunculus is the shadow cast by a coming event!*

Concentration, concentrated activity, will be the keynote



of Faust's long sojourn in Arcadia, when, having found Helen, he will let all the rest of the world and its beauty go by the way, while he dwells in that small paradise with the one aspect of power, and, in conjunction with that, plans the work that later on is to be achieved in the lower world.

But one point more. Who sent Homunculus at this critical period? Some good angel watching over Faust's destiny?

We certainly cannot believe that Wagner or Mephisto unaided would have been capable of bringing such a being to birth.

Perhaps the strange little creature is the messenger of the Mothers. They have seen the trance that is arresting all development save that to be gained in dreams.

Perhaps indeed the Mothers. For this soul that is being trained to so great a destiny is worth the watching, and worth the waking.

. . . . .

To return to the story. The laboratory is cooling down, much to the comfort of its occupants. The Devil is expending himself in compliments; the mannikin in the glass case is indeed a triumph of artifice over coarse nature, if what Wagner claims proves to be true.

The Spirit of Evil hates nature and the natural with all the force of which he is capable, and would heartily welcome this new artificial way of bringing to birth. He already foresees a whole catalogue of crime that would spring from the new régime, and therefore smiles and is most gracious to the inventor, for unnatural conditions are the Devil's best opportunity; he never seems to get much power over the man who eats well and enjoys his food, sleeps well and enjoys his rest, lives in the open air at work, or engaged in sport all the day, and has a couple of natural healthy sins just as an outlet for evil humours.

Wagner sets to work to try and establish some communication with the imprisoned mannikin, and great is

the joy of both upon discovering that not only can it hear and understand, but it can also speak in reply, having apparently come into the world thus strangely with a fully developed brain.

Their pleasure, however, is short-lived, for a few minutes suffices to show that however human the imprisoned *form* may be, the entity is not a kind of superior human child; that the creature is totally unlike what they had at first imagined, and, finally, that it is not in the least amenable to their commands.

Hommunculus gives Wagner the Celibate the sharpest of all the pangs of parenthood before he has been in the world for an hour, for he vehemently asserts his own identity, and teaches his creator the old truth that though the case may be entirely his own work, the life within is not of his fashioning, and may, or may not, be related to him.

Mephisto sees this fact of non-relationship a little earlier, and finding that Wagner's creation has more brain-power than Wagner ever had or will have, he throws open the communicating door into the dusty cell, points to the sleeping Faust, and asks Homunculus for advice. Wagner stares at the sleeper, but does not recognise in the handsome man just in his prime the old white-haired master for whose return he has been longing.

The little entity in the transparent case slips out of Wagner's hands, and shows a new power, that of motion. It drifts rapidly across the room and hovers over Faust, shedding a brilliant light upon the sleeper.

Wagner remains dumb with astonishment. The little spirit proceeds at once to tell of the visionary scenes through which the dreamer is passing.

Sunshine and warmth—blue sky and blue lake—a grove of trees—fair women bathing, one fairer than the rest—a wondrous swan that follows her—and then, a golden cloud that veils the scene.

It is Zeus wooing Leda, who became the mother of the great twin brethren and HELENA.

Hommunculus ceases speaking, and the light dies out of the transparent case.

"I can see nothing,"<sup>\*</sup> says Mephisto grumpily, incredulous.

"I believe you," replies the little visitor from the realms of the ideal. And then the tiny messenger goes on to say that, should Faust wake from such dreams of light and celestial love to the repulsive surroundings now about him, the sudden shock would cause instant death.

To force the man's consciousness back from those realms of light and beauty to the dirt and dust of the close cell, to the darkness, mental as well as physical, of his former surroundings, would be equivalent to suddenly thrusting a lever into the middle of swiftly revolving wheels, with intent to turn them in another direction—the machinery would be instantly shattered.

If Faust is to live, he must be allowed, be *helped* to go forward along the path that he has chosen, and any other course would mean destruction; and Mephisto has sufficient sense to see that the remark is true. But how can he go forward? and, if not among these surroundings, where else?

Hommunculus gives the answer that might have been guessed. There is but one country where Faust will recover consciousness normally, and of himself. Greece!<sup>1</sup> There, where his mind is already, take his body.

The time is propitious; that very evening is the Classical Walpurgis Night; some of the crowd present will be able to guide him to Helena.

Mephisto has never heard of the classic festival, and frankly dislikes the idea. He would fain stop Faust's progress along any such path, and again the tiny spirit reminds him that any other plan means death.

At length, and sorely against his wish, the mediæval Devil drags out his travelling cloak, and spreads it for the

<sup>1</sup> Having now Egypt, Assyria, and India to draw upon, we are apt to forget that for the Middle Ages, Greece stood practically alone as a symbol for Light and Ancient Wisdom.

journey, only slightly consoled by the little spirit's remark that even Greece has its spots of foulness, its Thessalian witches, in whose company Mephisto may feel at home.

Faust is carried in, and is laid upon the cloak, and Homunculus floats into mid-air to light the way.

All is ready ; but as the magic garment rises from the ground, Wagner clutches feebly at its folds.

"And I?" he queries pathetically.

"Thou," replies his strange offspring—"thou wilt stay here, conning the dusty scrolls, a most important task, while we shall travel far."

"Alas! I fear that I shall never see thee any more," murmurs the withered old student ; but he relinquishes his hold on the mantle, and lets others pass to that fairer day that he is not competent to enjoy.

Poor Wagner !

## CHAPTER X

### THE CLASSICAL FESTIVAL

HOMMUNCULUS proves to be a true prophet. During the long swift flight to the south-east the sleeper has never stirred, but as the pace slackens and the magic cloak sinks gently down to earth and comes to rest on the wide plains of Thessaly, Faust opens his eyes, and says : "Where is she?"

Mephisto is dumb with surprise, but the little guide answers gravely : "That I cannot say ; but through the coming night, go thou from group to group, asking for news of her, perchance that some may help to set thee on thy path."

Faust, half awake, stands up and bewildered gazes about him, the cobwebs of fair dreams still clinging to his mind. Mephisto shrugs his shoulders, turns on his heel, and goes away to look at something that has attracted him.

Hommunculus disappears—Faust is left alone.

The man's face is shining, his eyes soft and dim with unshed tears. "Where is she?" he repeats softly. "There is no further need to ask. If this was not the very sod she trod on, at least it is the air that echoed to her language. Here, through a miracle, I stand upon the soil of Greece ! I felt it through my trance. I touched the earth ; it quickened me, and I awoke."

He gazes earnestly at his new surroundings. He is on the edge of a large dim plain ringed round with hills.

To the south this rocky barrier is comparatively close to him ; the ground under his feet is already broken and stony ; to the north stretches the vast plain dotted with olive trees and carpeted with flowers.

A perfumed breeze blows towards him, and seems to invite him down into the fertile meadowland. There is some invisible attraction that would draw him down into the sea of grey-green shadows, and across that dim expanse northward to an unknown goal. He strains his eyes, peering into the twilight ; but the moon is still behind the clouds, and he sees nothing but the grey-green olives stretching away into the distance till they merge into the shadows of the horizon.

Faust turns to the south, and seeing small fires burning among the rocks at a little distance, argues the presence of some living beings, and walks towards the specks of light in the hope of finding a guide.

The first group that Faust encounters has for its centre Mephistopheles, and the magic flames that are wandering about the hill-side, and that looked so like camp-fires at a distance, throw a flickering light upon the scarlet figure and its strange surroundings.

It is a weird group that encircles the mediæval Devil, and this jester of men is evidently but ill at his ease among the new companions. There are evil creatures of all sorts, evil-looking at least. Some with lion's body and eagle's head and wings ; a number of malignant-looking little one-eyed men ; a host of animals like gigantic ants, almost the size of foxes, that now join the group, and now go scurrying about the rocks. These, and many more close at hand who join in also from time to time, make a motley assemblage that is sufficient to try the courage of the bravest.

To add to this, in the centre of the group lie two enormous sphinxes as motionless as if carved in stone, gazing with calm, untroubled faces northwards across the plain. The Devil has seated himself between these two,

and, feeling thus sheltered and fairly safe from possible attack, can afford to tease the lesser fry about him, and to try word-fencing with the sphinxes themselves, confident that they will not stoop to injure.

He asks the great quiet monsters to tell him a riddle, and they answer gravely, without moving their eyes from the vision across the plains, that he himself is the symbol of the greatest riddle that was ever propounded. Sin—the mystery!

Mephisto is still chattering flippantly when Faust comes on to the scene, recognises the uncouth, grotesque forms, and names them as they come before him—the fox-like ants, the malignant little men, and the rest of the strange creatures. He has a friendly feeling for this queer crowd, however bizarre or repulsive their appearance may be, for he sees them at once as links in the chain that will lead him to Helena.<sup>1</sup>

Mephisto calls to him, from his perch between the sphinxes: "There was a time when you would have away with all such beings." He has not forgotten or forgiven his *protégé* for his conduct on the Brocken, and Faust does not take the trouble to explain the difference between the degraded there and the merely undeveloped here.

His attention has been drawn to the sphinxes, and he stands for a while gazing at them, and then turns and strains his eyes across the plain northwards where they are looking.

"We reach not to her day," they answer mildly, when questioned about Helena. "Heracles slew the last of all our race. Chiron would set thee on thy way, if thou couldst find him."

As the deep vibrating voices cease, a twittering like a bird's song comes from the trees overhanging a neighbouring brook. It is the sirens calling—calling, promising all

<sup>1</sup> Faust recognises the far-off predictions of the beautiful in the forms of Indian and Egyptian art, the forerunners of that of Greece, and he is reconciled to what is repulsive in them.

knowledge, all joy to the man if he will but turn and follow them out to their home among the waves.

"Heed them not," says the grave sphinx, and Faust turns away, sets his face northwards, and goes down into the dim plain, and is lost to sight among the shadows.

. . . . .

Mephisto watches his companion out of sight, but remains where he is. *He* has no wish to go away on a mystic quest for beauty ; and the grotesque which is on the fringe of the plain is the only part of the classic world in which he would find it possible to exist, even for a while.

Even his present surroundings are not altogether to his taste. He yearns for something stronger in the way of ugliness or evil. The hills are crowded with life, and further south there seems to be even greater activity. A troop of *Lamiæ* pass, and he looks longingly at them, and the sphinx advises him to go in pursuit of those white witch-women. So the Devil slips down from his perch, and is led away over rocks and up hills in pursuit of the fair women ; and when at last he catches one, she turns to a slimy reptile or some other foul shape in his arms, and, mocking him, slips away with a discordant laugh.

Mephisto spends the long night in the southern mountain range, seeing strange sights, having stranger adventures, clambering over the boulders and the twisted roots of the ancient oaks and olives, and generally heartily wishing himself in the familiar north again.

His long search, however, is rewarded at last, for in a cavern in the hillside he comes upon the ugliest creation ever shaped by Greek minds, the three Grey Sisters—the *Phorkyads* !

These are the three sisters who dwell at the uppermost end of the earth, where neither sun nor moon can behold them ; and Kingsley in his *Heroes* describes them in their home in the unshapen land :—



"Seven days Perseus walked through it, on a path which few can tell—for those who have trodden it are the least likely to speak of it, and those who go there again in dreams are glad enough when they awake—till he came to the edge of the everlasting night, and there at last he found the three Grey Sisters by the shores of the freezing sea, nodding on a white log of driftwood, . . . and they chanted a low song together—'Why the old times were better than the new.' . . . There was not a living thing around them, not a fly, not a moss upon the rock. . . . They passed the eye from one to the other, but for all that they could not see; they passed the tooth from one to the other, but for all that they could not eat, . . . and Perseus pited the three Grey Sisters." And, as the story tells, got no thanks for his pity; they were more than content with themselves and with their destiny.

These are the beings who have come down to the darkest cavern in the bleakest part of the hills to attend the Classical Festival, and Mephisto finds them out, *and recognises them as his ideal!*

They are the acme of retrogression, ignorance, and ugliness, the height of all that is repulsive and hideous and barren; and the Devil talks to them through all the long hours of the magic night, till he persuades them to give him the one tooth and the one eye, and is so transformed into a Phorkyad himself.

"What a man thinks upon, that shall he also become," says an Eastern scripture,<sup>1</sup> and in the mental world the outward transformation is more rapid than down here.

Hommunculus also meets his destiny on this fateful night.

Thanks to his power of flight in mid-air, he wanders everywhere: across the plain, over the hills. He is the

<sup>1</sup> The Classical Festival takes place, one supposes, not upon literal Greek land, but upon its astral or mental counterpart.

main person in this act, and most wonderful are his adventures ; but we will only give an outline of them so as to get back quickly to Faust.

Hommunculus meets the old Greek philosophers Anaxagoras and Thales, and goes down with the latter to the sea-shore ; there the two find all the local water-deities holding festival amidst the dancing moonlit waves of the Ægean.

Nereus, father of Thetis, has come up to the surface from his shining palace in the depths, and with him there are troops of fair sea-maidens, his daughters and their companions the Tritons.

The voice of the sirens is heard again ; they are hidden among the rocks, and are singing soft, winning songs, and calling—calling to the sportive sea-men and sea-maidens.

The Dorides, the many daughters of silver-footed Thetis, are among the others. So also the Telchines of Rhodes, the great fire-workers that forged the trident for Poseidon ; these are riding on sea-serpents, for they are land folk. There are others with feet instead of fins, crowds of the Pselli and Marsi, the serpent-destroying descendants of Circe, and these ride on sea-calves and sea-bulls.

Proteus, the wise old prophet, is on the sea-shore : there is a riot of life abroad upon this magic night. Imagine the scene under the moonlight, the swarm of laughing, living things amid the chequered silver and grey of the warm moonlit sea ; but imagination fails us !

It is to Proteus that Hommunculus turns for advice. The little spirit wishes to progress towards a fuller existence, and the god of many forms, in answer to his questions, transforms himself into a great dolphin and bears the little luminous entity out into mid-ocean ; and there they meet Aphrodite, the foam-born goddess of love—and she is the answer to his desire !

The strange little being has but to see the graceful goddess to be entirely conquered by her beauty. The frail case which imprisons him vibrates violently under the

pulsations of his sudden love and rapture ; he renounces all thought of incarnation, the self-existence for which he was seeking, and along which path he imagined his progress would lie. He flings himself down in utter surrender at the edge of her shell-throne ; and the case which held his life together is shattered into fragments at her feet.

And now a strange thing happens, for the released essence or light does not fade away ; the human semblance indeed crumbles into nothingness, but the light, once set free from its bonds, bursts into a torrent of silver flame, and floods the whole sea for as far as eye can reach with its palpitating, tremulous glory.

It is a wonderful tale of love smiting upon the chord of self, till self in light and music passes out of sight. Turn to Goethe and read at least these scenes in his words, for we have not time to linger to note the half-light and to unravel all the delicate meanings ; it is a study that would take many a score of pages, and we must now press on in Faust's footsteps, following the man of strong purpose in his quest for his ideal.

We must follow the deep thinker as he passes on his journey of discovery into the antique ; leaving all guides behind him, going *alone* amongst those still living symbols of classic times, observing, weighing, turning away from, or turning towards that which he finds best—being his own guiding star upon the WAY !

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FESTIVAL CONTINUES

AFTER leaving the sphinxes, Faust sets his face northwards and goes down into the fragrant meadow-land.

The plain is dotted with wild olives, those strange, grey-green trees that seem so out of their element in the sunshine, and so contented and at home in the twilight, or in the fairy, silvery light of the moon which is now beginning to pour down upon the land.

Surely they must have been moon-trees long, long ago. Their inconceivably old, shrivelled grey trunks, and their dull, silvery-green leaves are not in keeping with the fresher life and brighter colours that surround them here. Perhaps they really were up in that dim, cold world long ago, and because with all their usefulness they still retained their mystic charm and their beauty (it is such a hard thing to do), they were granted another life in a larger planet when their own sphere was dying, and thus they still keep their greatest loveliness and their quiet happiness for the nights when their old ruined home is shining down upon them.

Faust passes swiftly now among the half-shadows cast by these olives, over the grass strewn with pale asphodels; and with every step northwards the air grows clearer and more fragrant, and the soft light gains in intensity, as the moon frees herself from her veils of grey cloud. The thin mist that lay along the grass rises slowly and reluctantly, and slowly again the gossamer curtain separates into strands of grey which drift away among the olives. Grey

trees, grey mist-wreaths, tender, silver light—a world of grey ! What dim memory is vaguely stirring within him of a world of grey like this, only then beheld from a mountain-peak crowned with snow ; and from that mountain-peak he sank into an under-world. Memory will not bring back what happened there—and after a space of years he was again out in the moonlight, drifting through meadows over sleeping flowers, with all his feverish longings satisfied, his soul at one with nature and at rest.

The reverie is broken suddenly, for as the clouds that veiled the northern horizon are rolling away as the night clears ; through an opening in the olives, there, in the far distance, Faust gets a sudden glimpse of a range of hills, and of a majestic snow-crowned peak, such as the one of which he dreamed.

*It is Mount Olympus, the palace-home of Zeus and of all the gods !*

It was this, then, that lay behind the mist, the unseen magnet that drew him ever towards the north.

Faust walks towards this goal like one in a dream—walks on till all sense of time slips from him ; till this pilgrimage, through the ever-growing beauty of the night, towards a still distant peak, feels like an eternal one, like a thing destined to last through endless years. With tireless feet, he seems, like the old Athenians in their sacred fields, to be “ever delicately marching through most pellucid air.” And he goes on, still wrapped in his dreams, his eyes fixed on the distance, till a sound of rushing water, and a streak of silver at his feet, proclaim a river that bars all further progress.

It is Peneus, and its waters are thronged with laughing nymphs ; and Faust stops to listen to their song, and to see their beauty, for they are on the path and mean something.

The voices of the laughing girls blend with the murmur of the river. They call to Faust to come and play with them for a while ; but as they call a group of lordly swans come sailing up the stream, parting the girls, who

scatter right and left, letting the snow-white birds pass on. The swan-leader has the bearing of a king ; the rest might be his courtiers. He presses onwards towards a leafy island farther up the stream, and the other birds turn and chase away the nymphs that would follow.

*What is there on that island?* Again the feeling of prevision comes to the watching man, and in another moment memory might have shown the link ; but the nymphs leave off their mimic fight with the great white birds, and cry to each other that the ground is quivering, shaking under the hoofs of some creature galloping that way.

Faust turns to see Chiron the Centaur, half noble man, half noble horse, coming swiftly towards them—Chiron, once called “the wisest of all things beneath the sky”—Chiron, who trained the heroes on Mount Pelion—Chiron, who can play so sweetly on his harp of gold, and can sing of all things : “Of the birth of time, of the heavens, and the dancing stars, of the ocean and the ether, and the fire, and the shaping of the wondrous earth, . . . of the virtues of healing herbs, the speech of birds, and of prophecy, and of the things to come.”<sup>1</sup>

The man calls, entreats him to stop awhile, to hear, to help ; but the centaur answers that he may not stay.

Then the man pleads that he may come with him, and the seer pauses while he mounts ; then together they ford the river, and the great demi-god gallops ever northwards, while Faust tells his tale.

Still northwards they go when the tale is told ; and after many hours the long, swift flight brings them to the base of Mount Olympus, and there, gleaming in the moonlight, stands the marble temple of Apollo. Memory is quick this time to tell him where the vision of that temple was seen before.

They stop. Chiron calls. The prophetess within awakes and comes to greet them.

“Where is Helen?” says the wanderer.

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley's *Heroes*.

The fearlessness of the question, the grandeur of the quest, win her sympathy. The venerable Sybil smiles upon the man and bids him enter, and Faust slips down from his strange steed, while Chiron passes on swiftly down the lovely Valley of Tempe towards the sea.

The prophetess turns to go within, and beckons to the mortal to follow her, to take the last and most awful step in the long search. This temple at the base of the sacred mountain has a hidden way within its precincts that leads into the under-world, the region of the mighty dead.

If the man is strong to follow to the end, he must descend alone into those depths ; must face the dread infernal deities ; must win his way—alone again—to Queen Persephone, queen of fate, queen of the past, queen of the dead ; and must move her even to tears with his entreaties, that she may grant him the golden Helen.

. . . . .

“Think of that night,” says Goethe, “when, with Faust’s prayer, Persephone herself is moved to tears.” But the story of that night was never written.

The verses that tell of Faust’s quest break off here—and they were never completed.

The history of the writing of *Faust* is a tale of constant interruptions, for the drama was worked at only during the leisure moments of a long and busy life.

The Gretchen episode was written when the poet was himself a young and ardent lover ; the last scenes were penned when Goethe, as well as his hero, was about to pass into the heaven-world.

There was a break of fifteen years once, when the poem was left untouched ; and again an interval of twenty-five years. In one way this disconnected work has maimed the creation. We see the joins sometimes, if we have eyes that are chiefly sharp to detect flaws ; but in another way the drama has gained in a reality that is far more worth having.

A story that took a lifetime to write, in which the scenes of youth were dictated by youth, the court life written by a then courtier, the freshness of the hills described by a poet living in the hills, and that future world sketched by one then on the verge of it—such a story ceases to be a writing; it becomes a living organism, and has a vital reality which more than compensates for a certain superficial lack of unity. (Superficial only, for the story was conceived as a whole in youth, though its elaboration took a lifetime.)

The writing of the drama reads us a great lesson. Goethe's life was a life of great achievements; but it was also a time of many renunciations. The man was great enough to limit himself to serve the petty needs about him. The tragedy suffered because his time was given to small daily duties; to the administration of the Court Theatre, so that it should become a centre of teaching; to dry political details (the poet was for many years Prime Minister of his own small state); to thought, how to amuse and instruct his royal master; to care, how to help the struggling authors or artists around him.

All this took time—*wasted* his time, a smaller man would have said; but Goethe was great enough to become small for the helping of the small things round him, and when a young literary man once ventured to show the old dramatist how much he had lost in productiveness by this overgraciousness to his inferiors, his senior answered with deep meaning and quiet humour—

“All that I have done has been symbolical, so it was indifferent to me whether I was making pots or dishes.”



## CHAPTER XII

### THE LAND OF OUR IDEAL—THE THRESHOLD

WE mortals, even down to the poorest and meanest of us, are all potential kings ; and the strangest part of it is that when we might be empire-builders, we are often nearly landless men. We somehow lacked the energy that would have set us building, have not troubled to speculate even upon the reason of the planning power within, and the superabundance of material lying on all sides without, so we are contented with a poor, pitiful acre, when we might have had a whole earth.

Yet this ideal world is well worth the fashioning. It can be a place of great beauty ; it is always a quiet spot for work, and is a haven and a refuge at those times when everything down here is seemingly going against us—those times when we feel like that victim of the Inquisition who saw the iron walls of his prison slowly changing shape and closing in upon him to crush him. It may save our reason, then, if we can leave the suffering body for a while and slip away into our kingdom, where all is as we would have it, and where nothing that is displeasing to us can exist.

Whether it be but a sunny garden with a few flowers, or a mighty empire that we have built, we are always omnipotent there, are ever rulers with a power that is beyond any dreamt of on earth.

We it was who caused the dry land to appear out of a misty void. The bed of the sea was carved out by our endeavours ; the height of the sky determined by the

strength of our aspirations ; the green of the hills, the colours of the flowers, are but answers to our most intimate moods. So, too, the only boundaries or deficiencies in this strange land are due, and due solely, to our own weaknesses and limitations. Remember it ; if you shut your ears to music down here, there will be no bird-songs in your kingdom.

Unhindered enterprise may be ours in the sphere of the ideal. Cost and want of time, these two great earthly hindrances, do not exist over there. The material for building is to be had for the asking ; the labour is our own, and our strength increases as we work ; and time (it is a strange world)—time is what we make it, for we are the sun that gave birth to the sphere, that orders its seasons, that nourishes and lights it, and other light and movement in it than our own there is none and can be none.

So if our kingdom is populous and great, ours the fullness of rejoicing. If it is shrunken and dull ; if its seas are puddles and its skies low and lowering, its land such as can bear no healthy life, ours the blame. Ours the suffering too, for in the beginning we make the land, but in the end the land re-acts most powerfully upon us.

By the way there is another strong influence at work on the shaping of the country, which after the beginning is but partly under our control. There is the Queen-Consort.

All the kings are married ; that is the way the country begins. The King goes away directly after his coronation to the distant land of the Thither-side, and wins a princess and brings her away with him to be his queen ; and from their feet as they journey, the new country begins to grow, and it grows and grows till sometimes it reaches to the yellow walls of Heaven.

Then the Queen develops according to that which is in her, and the King grows like the Queen, and the country grows like the King ; so the choosing of the Queen-Consort is no light matter.

One writer puts it very plainly, he says—

"Each one is bound to his ideal. He whose ideal is mortal must die when his ideal dies. He whose ideal is immortal must become immortal to attain it" (F. Hartmann).

But men have strange fancies when it comes to wife-choosing. The ugly, selfish daughters of Plutus are the most sought after, and everyone knows they are short-lived and but poor company.

Now we will turn back to our story, and follow the destiny of one who chose a queen who was all beautiful and all but an immortal, and try and realise the loveliness of that land of wide horizons and calm skies, of stern castles and tender green wood and meadow, which they created and lived in.

The threshold of their world is confused, somewhat blurred and distorted. We are made aware again and again that we are in a visionary sphere where many things are merely luminous shadows, reflections cast by distant verities, or pale memories from the far-away earth.

Faust's affinities colour his dream-world. The scenery is half Gothic, half Greek; wholly unsubstantial. The palaces or castles fade away into the mist at a word, and the people that thronged the scenes vanish with their surroundings. The noblest of these dream-creatures has but a transient vitality; some are literally the puppets of a moment, the pictorial result of a merely passing thought.

Mind is composite, so neither it nor its creations are eternal. Mind is but a bundle of emotions and thoughts, and when the string is cut the bundle, as a separate thing, ceases to exist. So this soul, or mind-sphere, shares the mortality of its creator—a touch reduces the whole creation to the elements.

As Goethe says, we have two selves—two only, remember—and many is the time that he preaches that there are but two verities, nature and spirit—the positive and

negative poles of the manifesting God. Mind is but the shuttle weaving a brilliant broidery of consciousness between these two fixed points.

So Goethe, mindful of the non-permanency of all else but these two, calls this interlude in the mind-world a "phantasmagoria." It is a play of shades and shadows—shades like the chorus who are but mist-wreaths of thought coloured and held together for a moment in the semblance of human form, to dissolve at the end of the dream into the thin elements from which they were drawn ; shadows like Helen and the Evil One, who are dim replicas of a reality.

The great Queen, as we know, is the reflection of ideal beauty, as seen by the ancient Greeks and re-discovered by Faust. Mephisto, who appears in the guise of a Phorkyad, is ever the spirit of negation ; the shadow-form that he wears in the land of loveliness is of course its opposite—foul ugliness.

But even these two are but half real—these moving, speaking symbols dressed in human form ; the only eternal creature in this vision-world is Faust himself. And even with him we feel that he is not there in his entirety, that some part of him lies sleeping, while his double acts a rôle in Arcadia.

It is not like the visit to the mothers ; the whole man was alive and awake there.

*Act III. Sc. I.*—Our first glimpse of this fair vision-world is again a scene of ancient Greece.

Helena enters, attended by a group of captive Trojan women. She is dazed with her sudden ascent from the realms of Persephone ; the years of her sojourn there have been blotted out from her memory. She imagines herself just landing after the voyage from Troy ; thinks she has just then left her husband King Menelaus on the beach with all his soldiers, and that the strange feeling of confusion that hangs about her brain is due to the long tossing on the open sea.

She halts before the palace-home of Menelaus, and de-

claims in long verses of Grecian metre ; describes her voyage ; recalls her childhood on this spot. And the chorus of women echo or reply. It is like a scene from one of the archaic and conventional Greek dramas ; there are few of the rough turns and touches of real life.

We watch the play with the feeling that it *is* a play. The Queen declaims ; the chorus echo ; it is vague and unreal. Then the Phorkyad makes her entrance, coming from the palace, and the horrid semblance terrifies both the sorrowing Queen and her silly, sheep-like attendants. The Phorkyad poses as the wise old stewardess left by the King to guard and tend the home in the absence of its owners. She affects not to know the Queen, will not let her enter her home, and hurries and worries defenceless beauty, while the King tarries on the beach below.

(Mephisto is enjoying himself underneath his mask.)

Under the pretext of telling the erring Queen all that has happened during her absence, the Phorkyad taunts her with her past ; questions and bewilders her about her present, till part of the memory of the under-world comes suddenly back to Helen, and she faints in the arms of her attendants, crying that she is but a phantom among phantoms.

There is much wailing, but the Queen recovers both her consciousness and her lost self-control, takes up her rôle again, and rebukes the old beldame with dignity, bringing her down to some sort of superficial respect. The chorus of women have less self-control ; they taunt the old stewardess with her appearance, her *unusual* hideousness, and a sharp war of words ensues.

"How loathsome ugliness does look when nigh to beauty !" remarks one of the chorus absently.

"How wise discretion, when next to folly !" says the Phorkyad to the air.

One pretty girl steps forward and entreats the old hag to tell them tales about her father, Erebus the Dreadful.

"Then tell thou us of Scylla, thy twin-sister," retorts the stewardess sweetly. Scylla, the monster with six heads who barks like a dog, and feeds on men.

"Nay, rather thou, who art so rich in kindred monsters worse than Scylla," is the reply.

There is a primitive simplicity and directness in their repartee.

The stewardess turns round with a snarl, and consigns the youthful speaker to the infernal regions where all her relations already have their abode; and another girl cries—

"In truth, for those who live in Hades are too young to be fit company for thee."

And another: "Why, let us think. Orion's foster-mother must have been her great-great-granddaughter."

This is putting the Phorkyad's age beyond all human reckoning, and she turns round with abuse that increases in venom, till the Queen silences the wranglers; but it is all done with measured gesture, and in measured verse.

From what follows later we suspect that (Mephisto) the Phorkyad was sent to welcome Helena and bring her with honour to a central castle that Faust has erected for her fit reception; but, out of his master's sight, the Evil One distorts the errand as much as may be, and in giving the message to Helena, as we said, harps upon her sorrows and her past till, as we saw, the Queen falls fainting with anguish of remembered griefs.

At this the evil hag relents a little, and goes on with the message, though still distorting it to torment and annoy. She explains that King Menelaus has brought home his erring wife but for the pleasure of sacrificing her in front of the desecrated home, and that to further adorn the sacrifice the captive women will be strangled and hung in a row like so many chickens. There is but one way for them to escape this doom. They must throw themselves for protection upon the mercy of a robber-chief whose grey castle adorns the hills towards the north.

The phantom chorus scream and wail, their laments

increasing as there is a noise of an approaching troop—the King and his men coming up the hill from the shore.

The Queen hesitates ; the chorus appeal to their would-be rescuer and dread death.

"Let these be timid," says Helen proudly. "Pain I feel, but terror none. Yet if thou knowest of rescue, grateful I accept."

"Speak, and speak quickly," moan the chorus. "Tell us quickly how we may escape the fearful, fatal nooses wound about our tender throats. Already in anticipation we can feel the choking, smothering—if thou, Rhea, lofty mother of the gods, to mercy be not moved."

"Have you then patience," says the Phorkyad maliciously—"patience such long-winded course of speech to hear in silence. Manifold the stories are."

"Patience enough. Meanwhile in hearing still we live."

The Phorkyad begins her tale, which is long-winded enough. It commences with the wisdom of a man who stays at home, and the utter ruin that comes upon the dwelling which is abandoned by its owner fleeing away with guilty footsteps over the sacred threshold stone.

"Wherefore declaim such well-known sayings?" asks the Queen. "Stir not thus up annoying themes."

"It is historic truth," says the stewardess primly, "and nowise a reproach." She goes back to her tale and explains that during Menelaus's absence of ten long years, many things have happened—alas ! indeed, what is now the state of the once noble house of Tyndarus?

"Has then abuse become incarnated in thee, that thou canst not open thy lips except to blame?" asks the Queen.

The stewardess continues her tale. During these years other powers have arisen, notably that of the robber-chief—she is getting to the point at last. She describes his castle, his attendants, his youthful pages, lovely as Paris, "when he approached too nearly to the Queen."

"Thou fallest entirely from thy part," says Helena. "Speak now the final word."

The tale comes to an end at last ; they must flee from the wrath of King Menelaus, and take refuge in the castle of this robber-chief.

Again the sound of an approaching army.

The Phorkyad persuades seemingly in vain ; the chorus wail and moan ; and at last the old beldame calls to the King that the sacrifice is ready, and Helen turns to the evil thing with quiet courage and consents.

"I know thee well to be an adverse demon ; still, I will follow thee, though thou art powerful to bring evil out of good itself. I follow thee to yonder castle, *for to my heart has been revealed a mystery.*"

Her women rejoice, but as she speaks a sudden darkness descends upon them, and amidst the whimpering of the frightened women, the scene fades out of sight.

. . . . .

Helen is right in her surmise that the foul form covers a foul soul, but wrong in her estimate of its measure of power. The Devil can only lurk about the threshold of Faust's vision-world ; but that he can even enter, spoils much.

It is the old fable of the serpent with many heads, that will not die till all its necks be broken. The Devil as passion (the destructive element of the sensational world) the evolving man has conquered and subdued ; but the evil thing can still draw enough sustenance from Faust's lower nature to keep near him under other forms.

Faust has shorn the "Father of Hindrances" of most of his power by opposing to his lethargy, ceaseless endeavour and aspiration ; but the endeavour and the aspiration are for self-development and self-culture, and here the Devil can slip in, for all forms of selfishness make good foothold for him. Not until this love of self is utterly rooted out will Faust rid himself of his adhesive companion, and until that far day all fair things that he conquers will have their shadow, or negative side, embodied by this fiend and dogging them at their heels.



Still, the Fiend does not get much beyond the threshold of this ideal world ; he does not enter at all into parts of it which we are privileged to see, and when we meet the Devil again, he has sunk to be the merest spectator and narrator.

. . . . .

*Act III. Sc. 2.*—The darkness that had enveloped the scene begins to lighten. Before our eyes the black turns to grey, and, as in crystal-gazing, the grey curtain breaks and rolls away, revealing another scene which has formed within the lucent sphere.

This time we are looking into the inner court of a stern, dark, mediæval castle.

Very grim and gloomy this irregular square of buildings seems to the bewildered southerners ; but the inner court has many a quaint ornament, many a fantastic window and carved doorway, and it is gaiety itself, compared to the outer side of the castle. This shows nothing to the approaching stranger but unscalable walls of grey flint, with never an opening, save those sinister arrow-slits which may each conceal a spy and his messenger of death, and the yawning gateway with its iron teeth, perfect image of a monster's dreadful jaws.

The captives shudder, and repent their hasty decision, but their troubles are over. The Phorkyad has disappeared. The windows which look down upon them are soon thronged with eager spectators, and before many minutes are over, a train of servants comes pouring out of a door near to do homage to the Queen. They bring rich gifts, robes, jewels, and a throne, and, having arranged this, and strewn rich carpets on the stony ground, they invite Helen with reverent gestures to seat herself upon the dais.

Helen obeys, wondering, and the captive girls group themselves round her. Then from a large archway comes a long procession of brilliantly attired pages, *and in their midst, a tall and stately figure wearing the rich court dress of a knight of the empire.*

The pomp and the glitter call forth loud approval from the old-time women, and the Queen herself watches with growing interest and pleasure this gorgeous scene as it unrolls before her.

Faust has spared nothing to make his welcome worthy; the wealth of the Emperor's train would seem pale before the splendour of his following. He has wished to show the picturesque side of a picturesque age, and has wished this with meaning, and for a deep reason.

With infinite trouble, after superhuman strivings, he has succeeded in bringing Helen down to his own epoch; and now, everything that that epoch can show to interest or charm her is to be laid at her feet.

The glittering crowd at length falls back; the tall knight stands with bent head before the throne, a man in fetters kneeling at his side—the watchman who failed to give warning of Helen's advent—and the Queen is touched at the magnificence of her welcome.

The scene develops slowly. Life keeps time to a stately measure. We are in the age of chivalry, when a knight would sing of his lady-love as a distant star, would not dare to pay court to her in anything nearer than serenade or song—the days of the Meistersingers, the Troubadours—the days of such brave and gentle knights as Wolfram von Eschinbach.

Faust greets the Queen in measured verse. Helen replies. She pleads for the freedom of the fettered man. She has but to speak to be obeyed.

The stately scene goes on. We see the royal wooing, a thing of compliment and ceremony, a drama played out under a hundred eyes. In the end Helen is strangely drawn to this new life, new way, new epoch; is wooed, is won, and offers Faust her hand and bids him come and share the throne.

One part of Faust's desire is thus accomplished: *the Greek has met the Gothic and has accepted life among its new conditions.* Now for that inner beauty which Helen hides.

The outer has been won ; the inner meaning which she has for him shall not be revealed before a crowd, or taught while they are encircled by these cramped and gloomy walls.

Hence to Arcadia ! Away from all eyes ; away from all sense of times or epochs ; away to the centre of this vision-world, where the two, together and alone, may reveal each to each their uttermost ; where the highest bliss may be enjoyed and the deepest work pursued unhindered.

The Phorkyad enters suddenly with a tale of horror. King Menelaus is at hand with an avenging army. Faust calls up a host with but a gesture and sends them forth to conquer. Then he rises from his throne, offers the Queen his hand to lead her forth—and again the scene is covered by darkness.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CENTREMOST

AT last in the region of the centremost. At length in the fair land of poesy—ARCADIA—that place of wide horizons and calm skies.

At last together and alone, so far removed from all the jangle and bustle of the outer circle, that though the pace here at the centre is the swiftest, it seems as though they did not move, while the world of men is but as a speck of dust in the far, far distance.

The Trojan maidens lie in an enchanted sleep at the threshold of the centremost; the "wise stewardess" has been sent away into the woods to gather herbs and mosses. Helen and Faust have gone alone into that inner world, which is indeed invisible, unenterable save to themselves.

Even the poet who writes the story tells us nothing of what happened in those long enchanted years, when a man was found who dared to live alone in such close communion, face to face, with his ideal; for the regions of the centremost are sacred from all intrusion; their working lies open only to the eyes of the watching gods.

We may, however, imagine something of what such a companionship would mean. We can dimly see what widening knowledge, what growing insight, would come from intimacy with that beauty which has affinity with all things.

Familiar objects and old truths would look strangely new and lovely when viewed through Helen's eyes : the universe contemplated from within-outwards, and the teaching identical with that given by the nature-spirit when Faust was bidden to look from outward to within.

How Helen would show him the reflection of herself at the heart of all things, striving more or less strongly for manifestation. The worlds could never have been quite the same to him again ; he would have thought so little of the prison-houses after that, and must always have been watching their barred windows for a glimpse of a familiar face.

How long did he live and love and learn with that fair immortal ?

Even were we told, we should not know, for time was what they made it. Intuitions struck the hours ; and their advancing years were marked by mental epochs.

We are not told. We are told nothing. It is not until Helen and her lover come *out* of their world, bringing a new wonder with them, that they come into our cognisance again.

The first scene presented to us in ARCADIA is after a lapse of years, when the lovers have been drawn unwitting to the edge of their paradise, near to the gate of exit, and there the first cold shadow is cast by the coming sorrow, for the Phorkyad, lingering on the threshold, peers in upon them over the barrier, and then hastens outwards to tell what she has seen. She rushes back to wake the sleeping maidens, to warn them of the coming of their lord and lady, and to tell them of the birth of a wondrous child. (The Phorkyad, we observe, makes the most of what she has seen, and would like to leave the impression that she has been at the centre all along.)

The sleeping maidens start up and rub their eyes, vow they have been dozing but for a moment, and gaze stupidly about at the rocks and woods that surround them with hazy recollections of a great castle as the place where they

lost consciousness. The change of scene is great, and did they look closely at the boulders and trees that surround them, they would see more cause for alarm, for the rocks hide strange, horned figures, watching demons, evil creatures that wait upon the Phorkyad's eye.

THE LIFE-STREAM HAS CEASED ITS COMPLETE CONCENTRATION AT THE CENTRE, IS BEGINNING TO FLOW OUTWARDS ONCE MORE, AND THUS TO RE-ANIMATE ALL THE SLEEPING FORMS THAT LIE IN THE OUTER CIRCLES.

The Phorkyad continues her tale ; she is in great good-humour for some reason unperceived as yet. She tells the life of the hidden pair, and expiates on the beauty of their child. He is a creature that scarcely seems formed of common clay (though Antæus-like he draws his strength from the embraces of mother nature); he runs about naked and beautiful and plays upon a golden lyre that he carries. It is like a re-incarnation of the young Apollo. He is never still, this child ; he runs and leaps and dances, springing from rock to rock ; he is like a vision of one of those strange, half-wild nature-people—the fauns.

Naked, untamable, beautiful, and crowned with a shifting wreath of yellow light, a golden halo resting upon golden curls—truly a strange child ; a creature half spiritual, half natural ; a being in whom one might see many meanings. The poet calls him Euphorion—FUTURE MASTER OF ALL BEAUTY. A presageful name, a great title.

The glimpse that we get of this strange outcome of the wedding of the epochs sets us longing to know more of him ; we almost lose interest in the father for a while in our desire to follow the career of his child. His fervour, his freshness, his fire, carry us out of ourselves. When we find that he crosses the stage but to disappear, we are unreasonably disappointed, such is the blank he leaves behind him.

Unreasonably, indeed, for this is the story of *Faust*, and we must wait for ripening time to make it *possible* for another Goethe to write the story of Euphorion ; for the youth is even now still in the midst of his youth, so how could the tale of his complete life be written ?

The Phorkyad describes the child as best she can to the astonished maidens, and even as she speaks the whole scene is flooded with melody—soft, liquid arpeggios floating downwards send the air into rippling waves, and everything sways and bends under the influence of the compelling sound. The rocks, the trees, the creatures, all bend down and listen to the distant strain.

The music grows in volume, and (how we do not know) Helen and Faust emerge from the invisible. We become aware suddenly that they are standing there in the midst of the scene, and the little musician is with them.

The lovers are altered since we last saw them. The lines of care that seemed *burnt* into his face have not disappeared, but they are softened out of all harshness, and she even has gained in beauty, by a soft light which shines behind her eyes as she watches the little laughing child.

"Two is a perfect number for human love," she says softly. "But to make love divine a third steps in."

Faust smiles into her eyes. "Truly our love by this has reached perfection, and we are strictly bound each to the other, thou to me and I to thee, by this new tie" ; and some chill sense of coming change makes him add : "Would that it could be ever thus !"

*The purpose of their meeting has been fulfilled.* Is it this knowledge which makes him fear approaching change, knowing that there is no loitering amid eternal ways ?

As yet, however, there is no outward sign that the fair vision-world is so soon to perish. The laughing girls surround the lovely boy, and hail a new playfellow ; and he teaches them new games and dances, shows them graceful measures that he has learnt who knows where?—

perhaps from the swallows, from the whirling autumn leaves, from the swiftly rushing stars, or from those unknown sources of knowledge which well up in him, and manifest themselves indifferently as music or rhythm or light.

The games grow wilder ; one begins at last to have a sense of things rushing towards a climax, hurrying on to a height, perhaps to a veiled disaster.

Euphorion is not content with graceful measures amidst the meadow-grasses, but leads the sporting girls ever further away and higher up the hillside.

They come after him in pursuit ; he goes on in mimic flight, springing from rock to rock like a young deer, while Helen watches anxiously, till, finding that gentle chiding has no effect, she would even follow and try to hold back her child.

Euphorion escapes from restraining hands ; he will not be held by any, will be free, free, free ; belongs but to himself, and shall be hindered by none from taking the path that he has chosen.

The tiny future master of all beauty is to pay dearly for his waywardness, but, no doubt, both the defiance and its punishment are part of his destiny. Born on earth, he would have climbed straight to heaven, heedless of the warning voices below—but when was vicarious experience any use ?

Faust calls to him now to descend from those perilous heights ; but the boy goes ever upward and onward. The girls cry out to their playfellow to come back to the peaceful meadows, for they cannot follow such a wild career ; but he answers only by speeding on his way ; his measureless strength carries him from peak to peak, till he is nearly out of sight—it is more like flying than leaping now.

Helen strains her eyes to follow him. He reaches a peak which commands a view of the distant sea, and chants a song of triumph. But there is no tarrying, the



wild upward course is only momentarily checked. No one dreams of trying to stop him now, they only watch and wait.

Euphorion reaches the topmost peak of all the range, and now the panorama of the world lies unrolled before him.

From the height he cries down to them that there is war! war! in the near future—war and victory! That is the watchword—war and victory! victory and death! and he must away to join the ranks of the fighters, and wings will be given him for the flight.

So, without pausing, he throws himself into the air from that dizzy peak, as a strong swimmer might fling himself into the sea, and for one instant he is seen thus, outlined against the blue. Then the light-crown round his head breaks into a long streak of flame that soars upward into the skies, while his body, deprived of its light-power, comes crashing heavily downwards, to fall at his mother's feet, and there to crumble away into dust as she stoops to clasp it in her arms.<sup>1</sup>

Helen kneels down, her face hidden in her hands, rent by indescribable anguish. Faust utters a groan of agony; the child born of his mind is as dear to him as any child born of the flesh could have been. The dead body that so soon resolved into dust, the living light that soared upwards, what is the meaning of the riddle?

Does the child partake of his mortality, and is it dead? Or was the thing that fell only an outer garment, which the spirit cast away as it winged its flight towards the heavens?

From the depths of the earth, from the realms of Persephone, comes the child's voice calling, calling: "Mother, ah, mother, leave me in these dim regions not alone!"

<sup>1</sup> "When they shall have received the mystery during their lifetime, and have passed from the body, they will become flames of light, and streams of light" (Pistis Sophia).

The mystery grows deeper. Must that future master of all beauty go through the horror of the under-world, like his sad father, before he comes forth for the helping of man?

There is not time for thought. Event crowds upon event. The chorus lament and wail. Helen throws herself into her lover's arms in farewell and melts away within his tender grasp, sinking down again into that under-world from which he won her, and Faust finds himself holding only her white robes within his arms.

There is a growing noise, an ever-increasing sense of discord and confusion. The chorus move restlessly about; the ground trembles; the distance blurs. Those watching demons that were hidden behind the rocks start forward and drag at Helen's robes.

Then the Phorkyad comes suddenly into view and calls sharply to Faust to hold fast what is left to him. Faust obeys mechanically; and the lustrous white veiling dissolves into soft clouds which spread about him, and drift beneath his feet till they have wrapped him in their embrace, when they float gently upwards and bear him away from the scene to other worlds.

The confusion increases rapidly now, the frail vision-world is nearing dissolution. The Phorkyad withdraws herself somehow from its grasp. The phantom-sphere seems to shudder and shrink, it dwindles from a world to a huge crystalline sphere which reflects in its depths a moving scene, while the figure of the Phorkyad grows larger and more definite in outline in proportion as the dream-world becomes misty and shrunken.

We still see a blurred picture of wailing women within the sphere; but the scene grows dull and shadowy. The women still gesticulate, but even as they move they fade away into the background—some dissolve into the blue of the distant hills, others merge into the whiteness of the rushing water, or the grey-green of the trees. The scene blurs altogether; its colours have run into a mere prismatic

smudge ; the vision-world shrinks swiftly to the dimensions of a bubble in a dark immensity. The giant figure that watches removes its mask, and we see the mocking features of Mephisto looking down upon the poor bubble as it bursts and disappears.

Thus ends the phantasmagoria.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RETURN TO EARTH

THERE is now to be a pause in the march of events, while Faust, wrapped in Helen's veil, journeys through the upper air, with all the world laid picture-wise at his feet for him to study and admire. And while he drifts through the ether down towards earth and real life again, we also have time, as it were, to take breath.

In that crystalline sphere which we have been watching, life hurried on at such a pace towards the end, that we, as well as Faust, have need of rest. It will almost be a relief to return to the dragging wheels of physical life and to the slow pace of things in the world of men, after having been whirled along with such rapidity in that unstable world.

There is to be, as we said, a break and a few moments' rest ; but Faust is not coming back to a life of leisure or to a period of ease or peace.

War ! war ! was the prophecy, and before long Faust will be plunged into those scenes of turmoil and confusion and suffering which the rage of man creates.

Still, earth at its maddest is more sober and steadier than that shifting, bewildering region from which the man returns, and between the trials of those spheres and the trials of earth Faust is to have time for thought and for the gathering together of his inner forces—time also, we imagine, for slipping back into the physical body, which is not a vehicle in which he could have lived through the Greek Walpurgis Night, or have dwelt in in the land of the ideal.

Then, after this short period of leisure, Faust will be left alone, while all those who helped him will stand on one side to watch how much he has really learnt.

It has been all learning now for a long time ; the man has been working hard in the stern school of Dame Experience ever since the day when the mocking youth in scarlet half drove, half tempted him out of his chill and narrow hermitage, away from those dusty shelves and crumbling parchments.

What an amount of patient teaching has been lavished on Faust since then !

Now his teachers are going to stand aloof. He will be seemingly deserted by all those who have helped him ; not a companion will remain but the unwelcome and ever-present Mephisto, and during the time of this loneliness and utter heart-hunger, the last and most subtle temptations will crowd round the fainting man.

And meantime the Gods will watch, invisible behind their veils, to see how much he will try to give back to others of what has been so freely given to him.

*He has been trained, not for his own benefit !* In the beginning his cry reached heaven, his lament that he had learnt nothing, no truth wherewith he might go forth armed for the teaching and helping of mankind. Since then, truth has been poured forth upon him, up to the full measure of his capacity. Now he is left suddenly without help or guidance, and by the use he makes of this new power he will be judged.

Looking into the future, we must admit that it is by no means easy to prophesy what Faust will do with the light that he has gained.

Will he forge it into a glittering sword, or a thunderbolt, a symbol of authority to carry in his right hand ? Will he use it to clothe himself with a garment of dazzling brilliancy ? Or will he take the light-stream and pour it into many homely lanterns, keeping none back for himself, and then, like the man in Eastern tale, go wandering up

and down the dark highways of life offering these steady lamps to anyone that will take them in exchange for their old and useless ones?

It is indeed not easy to foretell. We have seen many times that the central impulse of his life has always been to reach truth but his motive for the struggle remains more than doubtful.

We have just called to mind that in the time of his despair Faust's cry was that he had gained no truth with which he could enlighten humanity. We have not forgotten, either, the time of the plague in his early youth, when, with his father, he went from house to house ministering to the loathsome sick, and carrying out and seeing to the burial of the more loathsome dead, working quietly for days and weeks amidst sickening sights and smells, in hourly danger of a horrible death, and with no hope of remembrance or reward should he survive.

Then, too, the old philosopher that toiled painfully up the path to the hills on that far-away Easter morning, and who, sitting in the sunshine, bowed and feeble and in pain, could yet perceive the beauty and the freshness of nature about him, and could still rejoice in the sight of the pallid townspeople crowding out of the city-gates from dark, dank streets into the sunshine of country fields and lanes—this was a very human man, full of tenderness and compassion. Surely such an one would turn back from any height that he had gained, and, remembering his suffering fellow-creatures, would come down to help and to serve them.

But we have yet other memories.

It was the same man who, in his pride, would have ranked himself equal with the spirit that "weaves the life-garment of Deity." Even Faust's cry for truth, if we call to mind the exact words, was a lament that he had not certain things wherewith he might LEAD and TEACH humanity—a very different thing from serving them. This sort of doing good to others is often conceit gone mad, or other-worldliness, though we may exculpate Faust from the last

of those two sins, for in those days he feared or propitiated neither God nor Devil.

But such a passionate desire for possession and power has come out so often and strongly in the scenes to which we have been witness, that it leaves us with a haunting fear as to how the struggle between Faust's higher and his passionate, imperious lower self may end.

And this lower self will be tempted to the uttermost. It will not sin again according to the flesh, and it has risen above the desire for rank, riches, and luxury—but what about POWER?

And power will be heaped upon him—this is the new temptation.

This is the new temptation! BE GREAT, BE NOBLE, FULFIL YOUR IDEAL, PREACH IT TO YOUR FELLOWS. IT IS NOT NECESSARY, NOR INDEED WERE IT RIGHT, THAT A MAN OF YOUR EMINENCE SHOULD GO DOWN AMONG THE CROWD, AND, LEAVING EACH MAN FREE AS YOU WERE FREE, SERVE HIM AND TEACH HIM ONLY AS MUCH, AND IN THAT SPECIAL WAY, THAT HE SEEMS OPEN TO RECEIVE. NO! STAND FORTH UPON THE HEIGHTS, GLORIOUS AND WISE, AND TEACH HUMANITY FROM THERE TO FOLLOW THE PATH YOU HAVE LAID DOWN FOR THEIR PROGRESS.

Meantime, before the trial begins, before the clouds now gathering on the mental horizon shall have filled the whole sky and shall have hidden the sun and all the stars from view,<sup>1</sup> there is to be a moment of light and sunshine, an instant of clear vision, a farewell message of hope.

In the next scene we are transported to an arid and mountainous region, to a stern country of iron-coloured earth, of jagged peaks, and yawning chasms—a desolate

<sup>1</sup> It is not a pleasant reflection, but we often need to have the sun and stars hidden from us to stop our endless sky-gazing; to have the contemplative or intellectual qualities rendered impotent by ill-health or lack of leisure, before we will buckle to and go on with the fundal, mental task of earth-travail and earth-toil.

and barren place, which apparently fosters and nourishes no life, animal or vegetable, but which shelters snow-wreaths in its clefts even now, in the height of summer. We have left sunny, fertile Greece, with its wise and lovely dreams and fables, very far behind. This is the stern North, the land of fact, purpose, action.

The magic veil which has borne Faust safely in its folds across half a world, comes drifting cloud-like towards a central peak of this bare stone wilderness, and, on touching the rock, divides, and lets its living burden step down on to the soil.

Thus Faust comes back to the edge of real life again, but he is only on the border as yet. He takes one or two slow steps and comes to a stop and stands watching the cloud that bore him thither, as it drifts upwards and then eastwards across the stony desert. He seems to be expecting some token before the barriers of the physical completely thrust him back from the regions that he loves.

The token is given—a sign in the skies. For, as he watches the wind-driven veil, it grows in volume as it floats away from him, spreading out into a straight line above the earth, and showing on this airy floor masses of pale grey cloud-pillows—tumuli we call them. These roll restlessly about, changing shape every moment according as the light or the wind catches them (no doubt Faust watches such sky-pictures many a summer day after this), and then there is a sudden calm. They open gently from the centre, as though a hand were drawing back a curtain. The pale, northern sun shines out for a moment overhead, and reveals a vast form leaning upon these white cloud-pillows far away in the distant sky.

Calm, godlike, beautiful, but so distant! Is it Helen, or Leda, or Juno? That form of serene beauty seems to be more the expression of a type than the loved, living body of an individual woman.

For some instants the vision remains, the goddess in the skies, reclining upon her airy pillows, looking over, or



rather looking down upon, the lower world with all its sordid cares and petty interests, herself aloof, untouched ; then the outline grows indistinct, and the form melts away into the background of grey, and in a few minutes there is only a cloud-rack drifting eastwards, which sinks to rest at last, a line of palest grey upon the hills that bound the eastern horizon. The sun has gone in.

Faust watches till the over-strained eyes fill with tears.

What message did that vision bring? Was it a warning that all the vast mental-realm world was but a cloud-realm, an unreal aerial kingdom, which owes all its seeming life and colour to the sun of our fancy, and the wind of our desires?

As the cloud-vision fades away, comes a second message, and Faust ceases to gaze into the skies for consolation, as he feels something stirring close to him, warm, living, real !

How to describe what happens? Faust seems suddenly to be both spectator and actor at the same time. He has become separated, divided into two selves and the two are going different ways.

From some central point within his being a shining copy of his human form comes forth slowly, and it is greeted by another who has waited long for him. Faust's denser human self watches dully. His shining double greets that other form—it is a woman, tender, loving, with deep wistful eyes—a dazzling vision of a day seemingly lost for ever. It is Marguerite, once more youthful and beautiful, more lovely than she ever was on earth, with greater depths of wisdom and love shining in those sweet azure eyes.

The shining forms embrace, and as the duller self still watches them, they rise from earth and float away together towards the heavens, becoming suddenly invisible.

They do not dissolve into cloud as the other vision did ; it is more as if the watching man became suddenly unable to perceive them any longer, though knowing that they were

smile: "More foolish legends! Thou hast a goodly store of them."

Mephisto tries to impress his pupil with a show of learning, and begins seriously: "When God the Lord—for reasons of which I am aware—exiled our band from those most pleasant regions of the upper air and sent us to the depths below, where fire eternal rages, we found ourselves in most unlucky plight. The heat was such, the suffering devils all began to cough and puff and blow and swell, till their sulphureous breath filled all the hells with foul and noxious gas. At length the depths could hold no more. The infernal kingdoms then began to swell; they swelled, and swelled, until at last the pressure broke the upper crust of earth. Then in the tumult that ensued, all things changed places. What was first of all below came hurling to the surface; what then was uppermost, sank to the depths. The crust of earth became the floor of Hell, and we, the exiled of the deep, regained the lordship of the upper air."

Faust looks out over the stern, silent land lying about them, and answers almost to himself: "To me the heights are mute. I do not question how or why they came. Enough that nature, having given herself to be the nucleus of the world, then turned her hand unto the moulding of the sphere. Later she formed the hills, and hollowed out the valleys, and clothed them then with living robes of green, needing no mad or sudden freak to help her in her joyful task."

"That's your idea," replies the Fiend complacently. "Only, you see, as I was there, I chance to know that things went otherwise. The depths contained a seething flood of fire. This raged and roared, and, breaking all its bounds, rushed up through many vents on to the surface, bearing upon its heaving breast rocks, pebbles, stones, and coming to the upper air, flung these abroad on every side. There lie the rocks to prove my tale is true."

Both are right, only the Devil, true to his nature, has

seen only the destructive side of those early days in the world's history, while Faust, under wise guidance, has had a glimpse of the great whole, which brings forth from all sides, "cause upon cause in perfect purposing." He does not attempt to argue any more with the undeveloped entity that has only eyes for such a small fraction of the universe, and answers politely: "It really is most interesting to study nature from the Devil's point of view."

Mephisto is more than content with this concession of silence, and proceeds to clinch his argument. "Of course it really does not matter much to me what nature is or is not, but it becomes a point of honour in this question, as I was there and saw it all. Force! tumult! madness!—these did the shaping, and, as I said, around you lies the proof," and with a gesture he points to the undoubtedly volcanic region in which they are standing, indicates the twisted strata, bent into wild fantastic curves, the long-cold rivers of lava, and the irregular masses of stone dotting the slopes, whose positions are eloquent of the tremendous force which hurled them to their present resting places.

"Well, to change the subject," he continues pleasantly. "How did you like your journey through the upper air? Did nothing please you even there, when 'all the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them' were lying spread out before, beneath your eyes? Did these awaken no new desire, or plan for pleasure or for power?"

Does Faust notice the quotation? If so, he makes no sign of having done so, though the parallel drawn may have been observed and remembered as a warning.

"Oh yes," he answers gravely, "I conceived a very *great* desire. Wouldst like to guess it?"

"That were soon done," replies the Devil airily. Like most unimaginative people, he falls into the mistake of supposing that what would please himself would necessarily awaken pleasure in his neighbour.

So Mephisto proceeds to outline Faust's new and secret wish; and he must have some power of reading thoughts,

for his description is a caricature of the plan in the man's mind—not an intentional caricature probably, but the thought itself as it would be seen by his strangely limited and twisted intellect.

"I'd take a town—a capital for choice—its centre a noisy market-place crowded with booths displaying vegetables, fruit, and meat for sale—a place of busy men and busier flies. All round this central square a maze of crooked, dirty alleys, a network of quaint and gabled houses. Then, further off, nearer the city walls, would come the finer streets, spacious, well-kept, and wide—large squares and handsome buildings made of stone. Lastly, outside the great town-gates would stretch the lordly suburbs, made beautiful by many parks and palaces, the roads alive with gilded coaches clattering by, with serving men on foot, with mounted men—in fact, with human ants of every kind; *and I would be the central point of worship for the crowd!*"

It is a graphic description of a social centre in the Middle Ages, with its filth and squalor huddled together under wooden roofs in the centre, its pomp and luxury spread at ease in stone palaces and castles in the fertile lands outside the town—its black flies that prey upon the decaying carcasses in the market-place, and the human parasites drawn about in gilded coaches that prey upon the bleeding body of humanity. Both seem equally contemptible in Mephisto's eyes, but he is still willing to be flattered and worshipped by those whom he despises.

The swarming, suffering mass of the down-trodden appeals powerfully to Faust. Perhaps we have done too much since then for the BODY of humanity, for the flesh, muscle, and bone of the social organism—for the labourers. We are beginning to perceive that in our mania for the possession of freedom, we have seized blindly upon its caricature, equality, and in so doing have dragged down the mind of the nation to serve the flesh. The pendulum has reached its limit and seems hesitating before the swing

towards the east again ; but in the days which we are watching progress was westward, towards Radicalism, towards undifferentiation.

We must always keep in mind that no one system will do for all time, and that pulling down differences and distinctions was as much progress in those days as setting them up again may be in the days of our children.

A pendulum is rather a meagre symbol, however ; the spiral is a closer picture-word. This also swings first to the east and then to the west ; but each impulse, while bringing it back to a former position as regards latitude, leaves it so much higher than it was before, and thus it is a fit symbol for evolution.

"Such an ideal would not content me," says Faust in answer to Mephisto's tirade. He speaks slowly, feeling his way as it were to the new ideal. "For one would wish to see the people thrive and multiply ; to see that each was fitly fed and taught, each human unit so surrounded that what was best in him should find a chance of full development"—he breaks off abruptly, his aristocratic training will colour his views for many years to come—"and in so doing you'd educate a pack of rebels."

Mephisto is still following out his own pleasant train of thought. "Then I would build a wondrous pleasure-palace, in a spot where wood and stream, gentle height and pleasant valley could be transformed into a fair, far-reaching park, and into gardens laden with lovely flowers. Then in this fairyland I would erect some dozen dainty cottages, cosy and small, fit nests for lovely women, and then in such a solitude I'd pass the flying hours. Women, I said, not woman, the sex to me lives always in the plural."

This ideal of the animal-man, developed man contemplates without interest. Such a stagnant life, shut out by walls of scented flowers from all the stirrings and strivings of humanity, would end for him in a cycle of boredom.

"A modern Sardanapalus," says Faust coldly.

"Well, then, let us hear your great ideal. Perhaps, as you passed but lately near the moon, your thoughts tend thither."

"No! Earth has still vacant spaces for great deeds, and I would work a prodigy."

Mephisto has a vague idea that his pupil is chaffing him; he gives him an evil side-glance and inquires if fame is what he is going to strive after.

Faust changes his tone, and says seriously: "No, the deed is everything, the fame of it is but the shadow." Then he adds lightly the next moment: "Still, it is power that I am seeking."

The Devil heaves a sigh of relief; here is an ambition he can thoroughly understand, and he hastens to say so, but his pupil interrupts him.

"Thou! How canst thou fathom what man desires—thou, with thy carped and withered mind?"

The Fiend gives vent to an impatient exclamation. "Well, as I am here to work your lordship's pleasure, tell me the latest whim and let this arguing cease."

And Faust tells him—in part. And Mephisto understands but part of the part that is told him.

Faust speaks for some minutes, sometimes addressing his companion, sometimes quite forgetting his presence, and talking miles over his head.

His subject is the sea—the salt and barren sea—the ocean in its aspect of destroyer. Yet he does not speak of it in its moods of fury, when dashing the helpless ships on to the rocks, or sucking them down into its green depths; perhaps he would class these outbreaks with Mephisto's raging volcanoes, seeing the storm as one of those "causes upon causes of perfect purposing," and thinking the purification of the atmosphere which the hurricane brings to pass worth its toll of human life.

Some more usual and tamer scene has brought bitterness to his mind. He has looked down upon the world from such a height that whole countries were spread out picture-

wise beneath his eyes, and from that height there always seemed to be a stillness upon the earth ; but the tossing sheet of blue water was never still.

Then, coming nearer, so that the scenes of human life lay open before him, he saw activity and order reigning on the land, force never employed except for some purpose (even if the purpose was not a wise one) ; but on the sea always an aimless sweeping to and fro—nothing attempted, nothing accomplished, tremendous energy working to no end. A barren flood that once a day and once a night sweeps over leagues of land ; wave upon wave surging up slowly from the depths, and wave upon wave deliberately falling back again, while everything that the flood had touched was cursed with its own barrenness.

Thenceforth who minds when the shore is but rock and sand ? But the sea sweeps with equal power along what might be a green and fertile coast. Faust upon a northern shore has before now often stood and watched the inroads of the tide till its power and its futility have driven him to angry despair.

There was a wide and land-locked bay ; when the tide was high, a dangerous and shallow sea ; when the tide was out, a pestilential marsh. Then, further on, the land ran westward with many a curve and dimple, the hungry sea each year devouring so many fields, so many poverty-stricken homes, and, not content with this, sometimes flooding the land for miles, and then retreating, to leave despair and death behind it. He recalls this, his recent journey has renewed an old desire.

Oh to be lord of this lawless ocean ! To drive it back, to fence it in with barriers of stone ! To watch it fume and fret and rage and roar outside its boundaries, knowing that you have said : " Thus far, no farther ! "—and then——

Faust suddenly stops speaking. His plan is not fully formed. This is but the first step of a long path. First he will dominate this lawless element ; then on the land

thus gained will spend labour until the barren soil is bright with blossoms, till sterility has given place to warm and joyous life. This were a task worthy of him—a self-created kingdom fit for winning—a region on which he could work out glorious schemes for himself and for mankind. But this second part of his plan will naturally meet with violent disapproval from the Fiend whose favourite pastime is destruction, whose element is aridity, and who introduced himself in the beginning as a son of chaos, and as a practical and hard-working believer in the ultimate conquest of darkness and nescience over light and creative activity.

Perhaps it is the recollection of this that makes the man break off so abruptly when almost carried out of himself by the vision of what he would create ; but also, we fear, because the first part of his task seems the most attractive to him. To dominate, to control, to bridle that which no living man has yet subdued—what a conquest !

So the latest whim is to tame the sea ! Mephisto answers that it is quite simple, and thinks to himself that human means will in this case be the best and the most effective. So many workmen, so much stone, and the thing is done. One difficulty, however, crops up at the outset. Land thus reclaimed would be crown property, and it would save much future trouble and no little fighting if the Emperor could be induced to bestow it as a gift, instead of having it wrested from him.

Mephisto is silent for a moment, thinking the matter out, when a distant bugle-call strikes on his ear (a strange sound in this distant wilderness of stone), and the puzzle is solved.

Faust is still busy with his dreams, and has not heard.



## CHAPTER XVI

### WAR

FAUST is not left undisturbed for long to his dreams of magnificent activity. The distant bugle call is soon succeeded by a faint, confused sound, the meaning of which there is no mistaking. It is a far-away clash and clatter of arms, the tramp of many feet, the stamping of horses, and all these have, as an undercurrent, a rhythmic throb, throb, throb, marking time.

"Dost hear the drums?" asks the Devil. His temporary ill-humour has quite vanished.

Faust stands still to listen, and his face clouds over as the Devil's has lightened.

"War again! The prudent man listens unwillingly to sounds of war."

"The prudent man is one who takes the favouring hour, whether it comes in peace or war. This is thy opportunity, thy hour. Wilt use it, Faust?"

"More riddles. Speak to the point. Be brief."

Mephisto shrugs his shoulders, but obediently gives a *résumé* of all that has happened during Faust's long absence.

"The Emperor whom we amused, and tricked with phantom gold (Faust's face darkens, but he does not reply to the unjust taunt)—the Emperor is in trouble. Coming while still in early youth unto the throne, he thought to blend together the exercise of highest power with selfish pleasure." Mephisto's tones are grave. He

can come the preacher over a fallen being, whether innocent girl or heedless youth, as well as anyone, but he keeps his preaching carefully for a time when it will serve no other purpose than to drive a despairing creature right into the abyss.

"The two cannot be joined," says Faust sadly.

"Well, he was bent on pleasure," says the Tempter reluctantly, "and all the while black anarchy throve and grew strong within his realm. The masses strove against their over-lords, and these returned the blows with fire and sword. Town lived but to fight with neighbouring town, castle with castle. Even brother at last would take up arms against a brother. The serf defied his master; the congregations rose up against their spiritual fathers; the churches harboured constant scenes of violence and murder; for one man but to see another was for two enemies to meet—and so tale went on."

"Went on! Went downwards into an abyss. And the end?"

"Oh, matters got to such a pitch that even the wildest grew afraid; then some cried out that anyone who brought them peace should be elected emperor. And voices bid the people turn and seek another, better head—one who would bring new strength, infuse fresh life into the realm, under whose fostering care justice and peace should hold their perfect sway, and make a perfect kingdom."

"That sentence has the taste of priestcraft," says Faust bitterly. His bitterness is not without foundation, just foundation. Gone are the days when saintly men like Anselm stood beside the kings, beseeching, warning, threatening them into the paths of wisdom. The decadent Church of the dark ages found it more profitable to foster the weaknesses of the ruler than to amend his faults; for when the king has many sins to confess and many fears to unman him, he becomes a more pliant tool in the hands of his priests, and penances frequently take the form

of grants of land or grants of money to Mother Church, a side-issue not to be despised.

In the present instance the usual means have failed, for the young Emperor has laughingly avoided his Archbishop, and placed his hated rival, the astrologer, on the right hand of the throne. The heedless pleasure-seeking ruler has moreover a fundamental stratum of courage and common-sense which makes him difficult prey for the pious. So the fiat has gone forth that this courage is to be broken, this common-sense to be drowned in fear ; and the vein of superstition which the Emperor fortunately possesses is to be diverted from the stars to the holy relics.

The royal courage and self-assurance must be shattered. A well-known historian says that the chief characteristic of Christianity during the Middle Ages was a conviction of individual unworthiness and sin. The Emperor thinks too well, both of himself and of human nature in general ; he is to be awakened from those dreams and driven to acknowledge the beast and the worm under the human covering ; then, should he still prove intractable, he must be dethroned and a creature of the Church installed in his place.

Mephisto describes the plan as far as it has matured, in answer to Faust's question.

"Oh yes ! It was the priests. The well-fed paunches were much in evidence. The uproar rose and grew, the uproar then was called a holy protest, and was consecrated, and now the Emperor with whom we passed some pleasant hours marches perhaps to his last struggle for power, or even for life."

Faust gives vent to a quick exclamation of anger. This to happen to a man whom all the nation should have given their lives to defend. He looks over in the direction from which the sound of the drums is still coming, and then begins to walk slowly over there, signing for his companion to follow, and while they make for a lower ridge which should give them a view of the plain, getting over the

broken ground slowly and with difficulty, Faust's thoughts outrun his feet and are already in touch with the distant army.

The Emperor has received a terrible lesson ; besides, in any case, the king's person is sacred (the old royalist instincts are still strong). Were he but put upon the throne again, surely all would go well? The youth is a youth no longer ; manhood must have developed under the strain and suffering of these last few months ; he must have learnt his lesson ; would not surely be so heedless again of his people's claims. Perhaps wise advisers (himself included) standing round the throne could inaugurate that dreamed of new era with this renewed reign ; but, even at the worst, the king is king, and cannot be deposed, and any ruler, no matter how bad, is better than raving anarchy, than the sway of the hundred-headed monster, King Mob.

Mephisto does not break in upon Faust's meditations, and they climb on in silence till they come out upon an open space at the top of a ridge, which commands not only a view of the plain, but looks down also upon a narrow valley in which, to their surprise, they see the shining masses of the imperial troops. Faust looks down upon the restless swarms of men, some hundreds of feet below, and makes up his mind to help with all the powers at his command.

A long and eventful day ensues. Mephisto spoke truly when he said that the forthcoming battle would be a decisive one for one side or the other. All the greatest leaders, rebel or loyal, are present, and the rest of the country is waiting to see which party will win, and will go over *en masse* to the conqueror.

The rebels have elected a rival emperor, and his large and costly group of tents forms a conspicuous object amid their ranks. The enemy is massed on the plain at the mouth of the valley, into which the imperial troops have

retreated. It is like a great cat watching at a mouse-hole, and there seems little chance for the mouse to escape.

It is still early in the summer morning when Mephisto and Faust reach the outer ring of sentries in the valley, and demand audience of the Emperor. Faust is disguised, Mephisto in his usual costume, unrecognisable as the late court jester. The precaution is necessary, since they left Court under a cloud. Faust is learning that to use evil to bring forth good (for a human being at least) is to walk through miry pathways to the goal.

To gain a hearing it is necessary to play upon the Emperor's weak spot—superstition.

The boy—for he was scarcely more than that—on his Coronation Day in Rome, returning from the Vatican, passed what was a common enough sight, but stopped to look, touched by an uncommon pity. In the centre of a square was a great pile of wood just lit, and tied to a stake in the centre of it was an old trembling man with a long white beard. The newly-crowned Emperor brought the procession to a halt to make inquiries, and the people answered readily enough.

No. It was not any particular kind of heretic, only a wizard that was being burnt—one of the side-shows for this day of general rejoicing.

The fire had hardly begun to spread. The victim fixed his agonised eyes on the glittering figure in speechless entreaty and their mute terror went straight to the boy's heart. He jumped off his restless horse and, to the horror of the imperial train, a minute later the sacred person was climbing up the wood pile; before anyone could interfere the victim was untied, and, with a gesture, set free.

The princes, temporal and spiritual, preserved a decorous silence, but the people cheered him to the echo, and the boy blushed hotly, remounted, and rode on without turning round again, while the fickle mob took the wizard shoulder high and bore him away in triumph.

To this incident Faust owes his present reception by the Emperor, for he gains admittance by telling the guard to announce him as a messenger sent by the Norcian wizard, and specially endowed by that great man with superhuman powers to help in this great crisis. As such he is received, and his help gratefully accepted.

. . . . .

Hostilities commence by the young Emperor sending a challenge to the rival who has been elected, inviting him to personal combat. It will save thousands of lives if the two chiefs can represent their people and the war be thus narrowed down to a duel. Moreover, the Emperor is so sure of coming off the conqueror in this case.

His message is received with open derision. The enemy is lusting for the fight, being equally certain of victory in the open field, so preparations are hurried on for a general assault.

After his proposal and its reception, the Emperor's spirits suffer a sudden reaction ; he hands over the command to the senior general officer, and refuses to lead the troops forward. Still he loiters at the elbow of the new commander-in-chief, and Faust as imperial adviser slips in a suggestion here and a command there, till between habit of implicit obedience and hatred of interference, the new commander-in-chief is driven nearly frantic. Sorcery and magic, too, are things which the worthy soldier loathes, and before the day is a third over he hands back his staff of office to his imperial master.

. . . . .

The day wears on. The newcomers, by virtue of imperial regard, are followed by respect and obedience ; by virtue also of the admiration and dread of magic implanted in nearly every man's heart, for the news that these are two supernatural beings has gone through the camp like wildfire.

The day wears on. Faust has still to tread in many miry ways to reach his goal, for the Devil is using ugly means to work his ends. With the magic arts at his command he sows disloyalty, panic, and wholesale hallucination in the ranks of the enemy, and then turns his attention nearer at hand. Three uncouth-looking followers have come into the camp at his heels, and these have found their way into the three chief divisions of the imperial army, and have become centres of infection for a mad, seething rage for blood, lust, and plunder, which floods the ranks and turns the rough men into raging fiends when the moment for the advance begins.

The hours fly past. The maddened troops carry everything before them ; they are possessed with the superhuman strength of maniacs. (By the way, wholesale obsession is a thing for which we have much credible testimony.)

The imperial troops sweep down like legions of Hell upon the panic-stricken ranks of the enemy, and drive them away before them as the autumn gales sweep dust before them down the roads.

The peaceful hills echo to horrid sounds ; the sights are mercifully half hidden by a whirl of dust ; the hours fly past unheeded.

And so the battle rages through the long summer day, and when the twilight comes and the shadows begin to creep up the sides of the valley again, the valley is empty save for the dead and the dying. The remnant of the enemy is flying in all directions over the plain, the imperial cavalry following hard upon their heels, and the Emperor with his following and the mass of the army are taking possession of the rebel lines.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE OUTCOME OF THE WAR

WHAT is the outcome of the victory?

We see the Emperor silent and, with a drawn and haggard face, enter the sumptuous tent of his fallen rival. He looks a decade older than this morning, and his manner is restless and strange. He alternates between periods of loud-voiced exultation and intervals of silence, during which he paces the tent with the air of a man who is thoroughly broken and unnerved. The walls of his fool's paradise have come down with a crash, and the outer world that he thus gazes on for the first time is a scene of horror.

The four noblemen who have entered with him have apparently been respectfully hinting their dislike and distrust of the strange newcomers.

"Be all that as it may," says their imperial master irritably, "ours is now full victory. The enemy are all in flight; there stands the arch-traitor's vacant throne, and, seated there, we shall receive the envoys of each nation. Each hour already brings its tale of neighbouring counties that make haste to tender their allegiance. The whole empire lies at peace through the great doings of this day."

The nobles have listened with respectful attention while the Emperor has talked himself back into good spirits again, but their silence continues as he pauses, and affects him uncomfortably.



He falls back into the irritable tones of a few minutes ago.

"What if some magic doings mixed with our valiant deeds, still it was *we* who fought, *we* who have won the day ; and Heaven favoured us, Heaven rained blood upon our enemies, Heaven spread sounds of terror, issuing from rocky caves, to daunt the foemen that assailed us, and unto Heaven the multitude will now give thanks."

He has again worked himself up into enthusiasm and into blindness of existing facts, for now that the tumult of the war is over, and the cries of rage and the shrieks of pain have died away, one uproar has given place to another and a greater one, for the camp from end to end is plunged in one disgraceful orgy, and the horrors of the night bid fair to rival and outshine the horrors of the day.

There is something very pathetic in the young King's incurable optimism, and perhaps even his sullen nobles, in league with Mother Church, are a little touched with compunction as he turns to them a moment later with his old sunny smile, and begins to shower favours and compliments on them.

He makes the first man a graceful speech upon the skill and valour shown that day, and confers upon him the office of arch-marshal. Then, turning to the second, the Emperor says that such tact and courtesy united in one man must point him out for the duties of arch-chamberlain, master of the imperial household. The other two he nominates his steward and cupbearer and a brighter mood comes over those present. They answer suitably and with compliment, they suggest a feast to celebrate the great occasion.

The Emperor hesitates for a moment, a new seriousness doing battle with the old pleasure-loving instincts. Is this rather not a time for fasting and for prayer? The danger has been great ; he has just assured his subjects that though the youth may have been heedless, the man upon

the throne is awake and alive to his responsible position, but of course that does not mean that on occasions—The hesitation is over, and he gives his assent. It is the first step back again to the old conditions.

A moment later a new and more sinister element appears upon the scene—"Mother Church"—in the person of the Archbishop, who enters the imperial tent attended by the chancellor.

Much must have passed to which we have not been witness, for the crowned head gives a deferential welcome to this haughty prelate. He is a tall man of commanding stature, with oily manners and small keen eyes.

The Emperor goes on with his speech to the other nobles, though it might seem a little wearily, and his generosity grows to recklessness; he creates those present lords of vast territories; they are to be absolute rulers in their own domains, against whose decision there shall be no appeal. They are to be next in power to the Emperor himself, and these verbal promises shall be written, and signed, and sealed within the hour. Half the empire has dribbled out of his finger-tips before he dismisses his following.

At last the painful scene is over, the sign of dismissal has been given, the Emperor would be alone. The princes take their leave, but when they are gone the Archbishop lingers for a private interview, and asks tremblingly if, as spiritual father, he may pour forth his fears for the sacred son of the Holy Church.

The Emperor is still elated with his newly regained power, and fails to perceive the drift of the remark, he even smiles in the bishop's hard, sallow face, and asks what misgivings it is possible to harbour on such a joyful occasion as this.

The priest begins his tale. He is at first pathetic and fearful, craves leave to whisper apologetically the substance of his message: but that unaccustomed rôle soon slips from him.

His fears are for the soul of his imperial master, for the Pope's anointed, in league with wizards and with devils.

The Holy Father still remembers the act of overt rebellion when the Emperor had been but a few hours crowned, what will he say to this new defiance of his authority? Will he not shatter the power of such a contumacious subject?

The air of servility has disappeared; the Archbishop stands erect, his eyes flashing fire, his whole demeanour a menace. There is no doubt that this is a formal warning straight from Rome.

"Now beat thy breast in penitence, and make amends. This ground on which thy royal tent is standing, this ground where thou didst listen to those advisers, cursed of Mother Church, this thou shalt give unto the spiritual father for his own, and thereupon shalt build a lordly sanctuary, shalt dower it with all the land that lies as far as eye can reach, and on the day, that first, the holy structure being finished, the multitudes assemble there to render thanks to God, then shalt thou also come, and, kneeling, ask for pardon!"

The Emperor sinks into the vacant throne, covering his face with his hands. The scene goes on.

The Pope's messenger declaims and threatens; the broken man from time to time murmurs submissive answers. The interview is too painful to follow in detail, for there are few sadder pages in history than at this parting of the ways, when the new era went forward free and rejoicing, and the old was thrust back by its own leaders into a worse darkness than that which it had endured before.

After about half an hour the Archbishop leaves the imperial presence, and passes through the throng of nobles waiting outside, making his way with downcast eyes and meekly folded hands to his own sumptuous quarters. There is but one thing he has not been able to obtain: the Emperor will not cancel his grant of land by the sea-shore to the man who helped him in his need, and Mother

Church is too wise to drive a desperate creature to bay, and so leaves that matter open for another occasion.

So the outcome of the war is twofold; what was one has become two. The established power, under the fostering care of the Established Church, will from that hour degenerate and decay, all the time unconscious of the process, and the new colony of peoples by the shore of the northern seas will begin to go forward, stumblingly at first, but still ever advancing, and increasing in power as the other wanes, *for the life-wave has passed into it and it cannot fail.*

NOTE.—Very roughly speaking, we may take the empire as symbolical of the Latin races, whose final activity was the Renaissance, and the colony of northern peoples as the three great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race—German, English, American.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### AFTER MANY YEARS

WE take up the thread of our story again only after a lapse of fifty years. Half a century! Many a man's lifetime.

Those fifty years, however, must have gone by with the swiftness of a dream for the man in whom we are interested, for they have been passed in unceasing and uniform work.

This lapse of half a century prepares us at once for great changes, but, even so, what has taken place still causes surprise. Both that which has been accomplished and that which has been destroyed have a strong tinge of the unexpected.

This drama of life recommences in humble fashion at a cottage door, and we cannot do better than watch the scene as it unfolds, listening to the tale of the great transformation as understood and told by peasant onlookers.

It will familiarise us with a partial view of the events, and make the comprehension of the whole easier later on.

*Scene 1.*—We are in the midst of undulating green downs. There is nothing in sight but these waves of land, stretching right away to the round horizon, save a little cottage that is perched on the crest of one of the billows.

To the north, after a little distance, there is a break, as though there were a descent; to the south the land slopes gently away for miles, so that anyone approaching from that quarter would for hours see nothing but the curves of

green stretching away to the horizon, and the little cottage outlined against the sky.

A weary and footsore man comes limping up this southern road as we watch, and stops within a little distance of the cottage on the hill.

The country has changed slightly since his last visit, and he pauses once again to make sure of his whereabouts. The long smooth highway up which he has travelled is unfamiliar; most of the old landmarks have disappeared, and had it not been for the road, the way would have been difficult to find, for the mounds of green are self-similar, and it is as easy to lose your way amongst them as to stray in a forest of low, inconspicuous trees.

The traveller is aware, too, of another change, less definable, which is puzzling him. Is it the air? It seems less bracing; the crisp taste of salt is lacking, and the grass is greener and more luxuriant in consequence.

The stillness too. Ah, that is what has seemed so strange! How calm the day must be, that, standing where he does now, he cannot hear the thunder of the waves. For just behind the cottage the land drops abruptly down to the water's edge; the descent is so precipitous that there is a wooden staircase leading down the face of the cliff to the beach.

The view of what is on the other side of the hill comes back to the traveller in full detail, revived by all the old associations which have been called up during the day's journey. And now so near his goal the man hesitates, almost fearing to take the few steps that will lead him to the end. The cottage is practically unaltered; it is the same picturesque, uncomfortable little hovel that it ever was; but what of those dear to him who lived within its narrow walls? They were old when he left, and since then the lindens that were saplings have had time to grow into sturdy trees.

It is fatigue finally that overcomes his nervousness as he

limps down the little pathway, and, raising his voice, calls in the name of God to those within.

After a pause the door is opened slowly and gently, as if a child were pushing it, and a very little, old, bowed woman comes out, and holding up her finger says warningly—

“Hush ! You will waken him, and long long hours of sleep but give him strength for fleeting intervals of wakefulness.”

The shrunken little woman speaks of one older and feebler than herself—her husband.

She does not recognise him, but he sees the well-remembered face under its mask of wrinkles and calls out to her that she has forgotten the youth that they saved in the storm, whom they nourished and watched and brought back to life again.

Baucis looks up quickly and then holds out her hands in welcome ; the bowed shoulders and white hair alone are such disguise that she would have passed him by without recognition a hundred times. They stand thus for a moment, till the old man, aroused by the sound of voices, comes tottering out to the cottage door, and stands there holding on to its frame-work, still half asleep, his eyes blinking in the sunlight.

There is more glad welcoming. The newcomer is garrulous with pleasure—old memories come thronging into his mind too quickly to allow of utterance.

They are really alive then ! Alive and well ! The cottage-home is still standing, and the little chapel behind with its bell that is rung on stormy nights to warn the passing fishing smack.

His tongue runs on ; one thing recalls another It is good to watch the simple joy of these homely folk ; but even at the last, when the greetings and memories are all exhausted, he will not yet enter the home. He must first go to the cleft in the headland at the top of the wooden stairway, to that spot which commands so free a view of the broad ocean, and, kneeling there for a moment, thank God for His great and perfect mercy.

The old people exchange glances, but with fine feeling let him go unhindered. Only when he is out of sight does the old man turn to the goodwife, and bid her bring out their best and spread the table beneath the trees for the tired traveller, and then after a pause thoughtfully turns back to the house, and, taking a stout staff, goes slowly and feebly along the tiny path up which their guest has preceded him.

The little woman, left alone, busies herself with the table, laying out, upon a homespun cloth, bread and honey and fruit and milk, all products of their own small holding; then out comes the knitting, and she works and waits till the men come back and sit down wearily under the pleasant shade of the trees.

The newcomer is dazed and silent, his hunger forgotten, for he sits in front of the good fare without partaking of it.

Baucis looks across to her husband, and he motions to her to talk and explain. The old man needs a moment's rest, for the short walk has utterly fatigued him.

They know what is passing in their guest's mind, and do not wonder at his dumbness; have they not often imagined during the past years that their senses had turned traitor and were deceiving them.

The sea has gone!

That cleft in the hills which was once an outlook over miles of ocean, now gives a view of as many miles of fertile meadow-land dotted with farms; while, far away, there are grey-walled towns; and not till the far distance softens everything into a blur of blue-grey, beyond a curving line of white (the wall), can you trace a narrow strip of silver sea. If the sun is not shining you have to strain your eyes to make sure of its existence.

The old woman is garrulous, is ever pleased to tell the story once again. The guest is silent. She chatters away noisily, the needles clicking an accompaniment; she has no patience with this new scheme, she says; what does he think of it? She suspects its honesty, its solidity; would



not be very surprised (nor, we expect, very sorry) to wake up one morning with the thunder of the waves once more in her ears, and with all the fairy-built towns and fields overwhelmed and destroyed ; and the stocking grows apace under her fingers as the story comes from her lips.

We can see that the old man also has no great liking for the new régime, but, man-like, he is fairer, and weighs the good against the evil. The new ruler at least came by the land honestly ; the shore was the free gift of the Emperor, and every acre of the reclaimed soil has been manfully fought for. An army of men came down on the heels of the imperial herald—almost fifty years ago now—and the green downs were sprinkled with white tents. More men were added as time went on ; the camp swelled to a canvas town ; the invaders dug and trenched under the new ruler's supervision, who in those days was a still young and active man. The work progressed by leaps and bounds ; the toiling never ceased by day, and rows of torches marked the lines where gangs of men were digging all the night.

A chain would be one day laid down upon the green, and in a magically short space of time a canal would lie broad and deep along where the measuring line had lain. Under the hands of this army of strong and willing workers, directed by wise overseers, buildings seemed to spring up in a single night ! Towns to rise out of the earth in a few busy years.

Baucis breaks in again. Ay, and the lives of those willing workers—how many of them have been sacrificed ? What of the blood that stains this wondrous enterprise ?

(Woman-like, she does not recognise the inevitableness of this toll of human life.)

Worse still, she adds, the impious innovator covets even *their* small heritage, not being content with all the miles that he has gained.

She does not add ; does not, perhaps, understand the reason why. That cleft in the hills, part of their holding,

is, by the irony of fate, the only place which commands an uninterrupted view of the new plain, and this piece of barren ground is wanted for a watch tower. It is a position which would enable a most perfect watch to be kept against any fire that might break out or enemy that might be coming. It is a question of private interest against public safety, as well as a whim of the new ruler's.

"Remember," says the old man gently, "he offered in exchange a homestead in the new and fertile land."

Baucis shakes her head, and mutters her distrust. It is safer up on the hills ; who knows what will happen in the plain some days?—and so on, and so on.

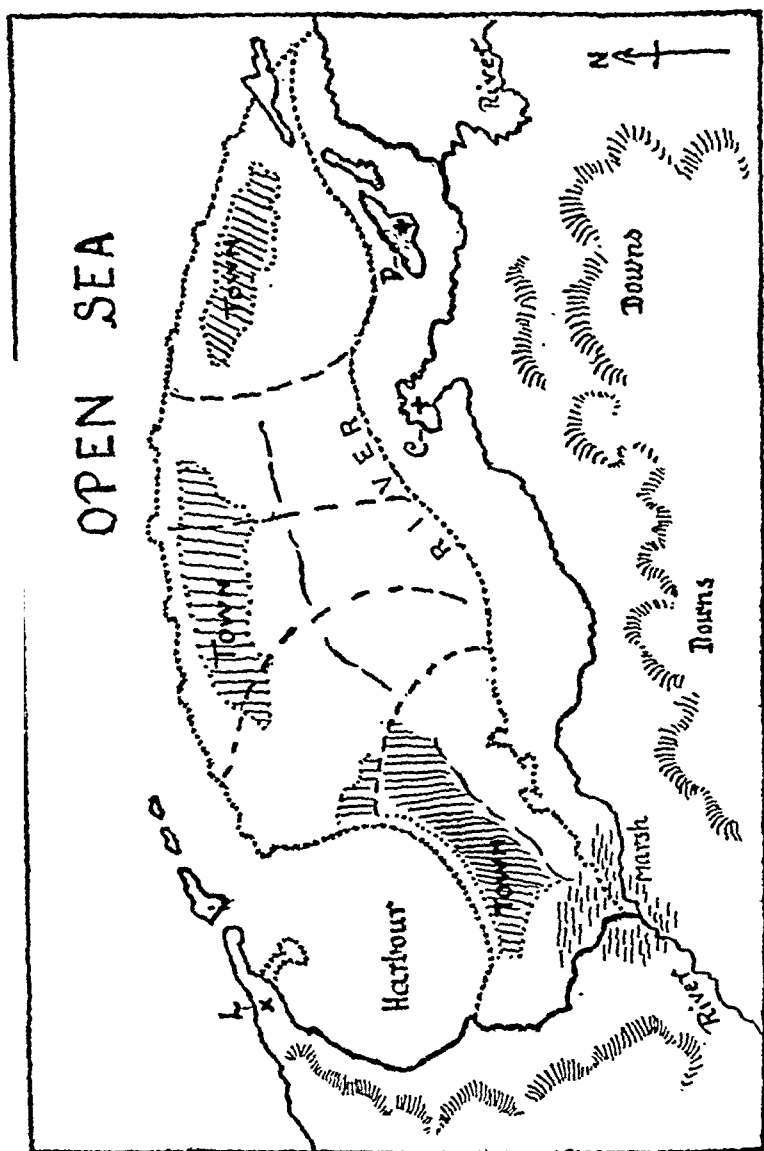
The guest listens without interrupting ; and when at last the twilight gathers, the three go up to their tiny house of prayer, with its small sounding bell, which once warned the ships that passed so close, and from thence they go into the cottage, and the door closes on them.

So we see that Faust has realised his great ambition, and in the fifty years that have elapsed has carved out a kingdom for himself.

Everything seemingly has prospered with him. He has, even as he dreamed, brought fertility out of sterility, and fulfilled his vision, incarnated his idea ; and, judging from the white palace that stands on a little eminence in the suburb of one of the towns, Mephisto has succeeded in mingling his ideal with his master's. The palace had no part in Faust's original scheme.

Yet, with all that Faust has done, he cannot be contented, for we remember that the penalty of one moment's pure bliss is to be death. The force of the compact has not waned with the passing years.

"If EVER I shall say unto the passing moment: "Stay, thou art lovely, then——"



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE NEW COLONY

NOTE.—In the drama there are only the usual couple of lines of stage directions or actor's speech to indicate the scene which is here described at some length. The growth of the colony is not spoken of by the poet at all ; but I have ventured to fill up the gap thus created with a short sketch of the probable lines along which the work progressed, so as to bring the magnitude of the task as vividly as possible before the reader's eye.

The rough map opposite is an imaginary sketch of Faust's territory. Older students turning to the drama will see upon what portions of the context I have based my conception.

THE next scene is one of surpassing beauty. Nature and art have for once combined to make a living picture of matchless loveliness.

You who are reading, shut your eyes to what may be around you, leave the present—it is sure to be less interesting—your surroundings—which are sure to be less fair—and come and see this kingdom that Faust has created.

Our point of vantage is a little hill facing westward, with an unbroken view over miles of fertile and thickly-peopled plain in that direction. To the north stretches a pale sheet of blue water : a lazy summer sea scarcely disturbed by a ripple. To the south our view is barred by a headland but the green and fertile valley stretches away behind this out of sight. Eastward our little hill is nearly on the boundary of the level ground, and the tall cliffs that hem the valley in on every side overshadow it.

This hill that was once an arid island has been trans-

formed into a dream of beauty. In its centre is a wondrous fairy palace of white marble, a building that might be the product of a dream, so delicate and beautiful are its outlines. It is ringed round with terraces, which glow with innumerable flowers and, like a flight of steps carpeted by nature, lead down to the ribbon of water which is the boundary of the property.

The air is heavy with the scent of these sweet flowers—graceful roses that clamber over the marble balustrades, and tall, stately lilies that grace the beds and borders.

The sky in front of us is a mass of feathery, flame-coloured and gold clouds. Sunset adds its beauty to the charm of the scene.

From the top terrace where Faust is standing, one can look right down upon the wide-spreading busy seaport towns, now bathed in a shimmer of golden light, which lie across the mouth of the broad bay. These have endless rows of white and grey buildings, divided by lines and squares of green (shaded streets and public parks); but one looks in vain for the usual mass of huddled, dwarfed, and dirty houses which mark the poorer quarters.

The tide comes right up to the city wall, which stretches along the whole width of the bay, and big ships are lying alongside within a few yards of the houses.

It must be a busy port and a free one, for all kinds and shapes of vessels apparently find a welcome. Many nations must be busy unloading their wares along the miles of quay, or sheltering in the harbour by the big lighthouse, under the scimitar-shaped western headland.

To the south and east and west the cities have no walls (the one barrier is against the sea), a strange feature in those days, and the lines of houses straggle back for some distance before the streets give way to white villas nestling among their own grounds. These in their turn again become less frequent, their place being taken by meadowland and cornfields with isolated little red-roofed farms and homesteads. The guardians of the colony must

live on the cliffs which surround this happy valley, and apparently do their work thoroughly, for the country seems rich, fertile, and untroubled, and *very* fair in this evening sunlight.

Faust is pacing up and down one of the upper terraces, and it is difficult to realise his great age as we note the erect carriage, and hear the slow but firm footsteps.

Time has not tamed that proud spirit. The white hair and long snowy beard, the shrunken hand and wrinkled face, the shaggy eyebrows—all these tokens of the mid-winter of age—are defied and contradicted by the fiery youthfulness of those piercing black eyes that glow and gleam in their cold setting. It reminds one of a familiar simile—a volcano powdered with snow.

As we watch him, memory goes back to the first scene that was enacted before our eyes. He was old then—old and wearied and fretful. A man of few interests and no human ties, a being so cut off from all the tides of life that he was almost a mental and spiritual paralytic, a creature whose heart was indeed still beating, but whose limbs were useless and numb.

Far otherwise is this vigorous and healthy old age ; for Faust is now linked to life in all directions, and in his width of sympathy lies the foundation of his strength. *Once cease to be a centre of forth-flowing energy, sympathy, and activity, and you have begun preparing your own grave.*

A proud title is Faust's now — THE FATHER OF A PEOPLE ! Of course the surroundings, the palace, the gardens, the velvet robes with their gold fastenings, all tell to the merest onlooker that this is a ruler of men ; but the thoughtful need go no further than Faust's face to read the same tale.

This man is one accustomed to power. The haughty bearing speaks of a habit of command, and a calm and certain expectation of implicit obedience following that command. The wide brow denotes thought and wisdom. This is no mean tyrant bruising out the lives of those

below him to gain some transient gratification. The straight, full, but firmly closed mouth is the outward sign of energy and strong control. The faculty of kingship, of wisdom and self-command—these are great things to have gained in a lifetime, at whatever cost.

Below Faust lies now the land which he has literally created. He has wrestled with barrenness and dragged the earth yard by yard out of the clutches of this offspring of chaos. Many thousands of human beings owe their useful, healthful, and pleasant lives to the indomitable energy of this master-mind : a boon that as yet they still gratefully acknowledge.

They are a picked race, his people. Man by man he has chosen them from among the millions of the down-trodden in the decaying empire that lies beyond his borders, and in the beginning has trained them man by man under his own eyes.<sup>1</sup>

Quick perceptions were needed for such choice ; almost divine patience necessary for their training, so very slowly only could those souls that were just beginning to have consciousness of a glimmering of light be led towards the noonday blaze of freedom and self-government. The task is not even yet accomplished.

Those first settlers that lived in the canvas camp under Baucis' jealous eyes were the grandfathers, in some cases the great-grandfathers, of the race now in their cradles, and the task that once seemed too great for human strength is now becoming easier with every passing year ; and the wise and kindly father of the race watches its small triumphs and rejoices in the successes of his offspring.

But will Faust be able to rejoice when those now in their cradles shall need his supervision no longer, having through him grown self-dependent ?

The old peasant woman was partly right in her estimate of the character of their over-lord. The colony is free

<sup>1</sup> Goethe has (intentionally or unintentionally) drawn the picture of a Manu at his appointed task.

truly, *but under his beneficent sway*; it is not free to develop along lines that he has not previously marked out.

The time is not ripe yet for such complete emancipation, though it is drawing very near—one wonders rather how the kindly but autocratic old man will face the situation when it comes.

However, until now Faust's work has been well and wisely done, and he has worked shoulder to shoulder with the people at times, though his chief task has of course lain in the direction of supervision and administration.

Many have been the mistakes and failures during the growth of this new land and its people. Indeed, looking back upon the path which they have travelled, it seems to have been so strewn with wrecks and hindrances that even the master sometimes wonders at their having come into sight of the goal.

The people who were to benefit most by the work were often its greatest hindrance. How the best of them misunderstood and suspected him! What excellent serfs and diggers they made; and how they misused or frittered away any power that was given to them in reward for good labour!

What wild outbreaks of lawlessness and bloodshed! What lapses into superstitious fear! Fear of freedom, fear of the sunlight!

Some, even many, deserted, going back to their lives of practical slavery under some brutal baron or exacting prince of the Church, preferring the discomfort, dirt, and semi-starvation, with permission to live like animals, to the good food and comfortable quarters of the new régime, coupled with its exaction of cleanliness of body and morals and activity of mind.

There have been also wild outbreaks of passion on the part of the ruler, as well as on the side of the ruled, during the building of this fair kingdom, and when the master raged and stormed, the latter at once understood and



admired, slipping back easily and willingly into the serf-stage not long abandoned; and then the weary work of training these men to stand up and face the sun had all to be begun over again with a penitent master and a newly bewildered crowd.

It would take volumes to tell of all that has happened in the past half-century. The rôle of ruler of men has only been one among many parts that this father of a race has had to play. Everything that appertains to the well-being of a state, Faust has had first to learn and then to teach.

Mephisto, unwilling and slippery helper, has doubtless often been sent to scour the empire for manuscripts and men. Frightened specialists may have been haled by the heels to the valley to act as instructors; and when Faust has learnt all that they have been able to teach, and then desired solitude, so as to think over the old methods, and see in what ways they could be improved, these learned men have probably been taken swiftly back to their old quarters by night on the magic travelling cloak, so that when they woke at daybreak, and with thankfulness recognised their old familiar room, they might think the whole journey a dreadful dream, but for the evidence of the bag of gold thrown down at the bedside.

Somehow, certainly the lessons of state-building have been learnt, and have been learnt well.

But Faust, the dreamer, began his studies at the very bottom, and started with the theories of land-drainage, a subject he has not quite perfectly mastered, as we shall see a little later on. The exact sciences do not come easily to the poetic and artistic nature, and this was his first attempt at anything of that kind.

Practice came hot upon the heels of theory. A network of canals was planned to stretch over the reclaimed land, and some hundred men were set to dig and trench along the strip of shore under Baucis Cottage. This was the beginning.

Faust and his specialists then moved to the western headland—where the lighthouse now stands—and on that spot the project of the great sea-wall was discussed and drawn out. This was perhaps the hardest part of the task, and the one that claimed its largest share of human victims. Faust often despaired in those days when they fought against the arrogance and might of the ocean. They would plan and toil and build for months, till one day the sea would stir herself to petulance (not to real anger), and in playing with them, as it were, would scatter their piles of stone and their strong towers as if they were only children's castles of sand.

But arrogance met arrogance, and there is no stimulus like pride. And though it was after years of ceaseless striving, the day dawned that saw the stone boundary stretching right across the bay, with the angry waves dashing impotently up against its smooth curves, and the salt water, thus hemmed into the valley, turning into a sullen and a stagnant lake. Then the worst of the work seemed over, and as Faust looked down in pride upon his achievement, he under-estimated the subtle difficulties still ahead of him.

Sentries and watchmen and some handfuls of labourers and a couple of reliable overseers were left on the broad sea-wall, and the tide of action followed Faust as he went inland again to the workers on the canals. These now grew with the swiftness of magic under his supervision; and the disapproving eyes of Baucis watched them from the headland.

Finally, and this again took years, though the work was done at lightning speed—the *dry land appeared!* And with an arrangement of sluices down by the sea-wall, the canals, which were fed with fresh water from hill streams, were emptied at low tide, and were dammed up when the sea rose, and thus kept pure from the taint of the salt.

The squares of earth between them dried into arid brown patches, and the deaths from sickness among the workmen

began to decrease. Malacca had stolen more lives in a month sometimes than the angry sea had taken in the half year.

The cannon town was moved from the downs on to the new land, and Faust took up his quarters in a wooden hut on the quagmire island on which his palace now stands.

The digging and trenching now gave place to a style of road-making not seen since the days of old Rome. Faust intended his highway to be permanent.

One day Faust's comes back from her post of observation with the news that men with little pegs and measuring chains are climbing all over the cliff's half a mile to the east of them, there where the slope into the valley is most gradual. And before many months have elapsed the pegs are replaced by a broad road which winds up the hill in long easy zigzags, and then crosses the downs, running south within a few feet of the bottom of their garden.

At this time a courteous message comes from the new ruler. He wishes to buy their property for the purpose of erecting a watch-tower on it—what is the price? The old woman's eyes flash fire; she goes in to her husband; the reply is an abrupt and uncompromising refusal. They will not treat on any terms.

Faust gives orders on the subject of road-making which will take many months to carry out, and, going down to the basin of water under the western hill, proceeds to turn it into a safe and convenient harbour, and, this done, declares the port to be free to all nations.

(The Emperor must have guaranteed the neutrality of this new state, for we read of no attempt to seize what was becoming a valuable prize.)

Mephisto's power begins to wane as the ships come in, for supplies can be got now without any resort to his tricks; and as Faust gains natural means, he invariably discards magic for working his purpose. The Devil's best gifts always seem to carry a curse with them. Mephisto is called upon to supply gold only after this.

About this time Faust turns his attention to architecture and agriculture. Until now some log huts for the workers and some clumsy sheds along the quay for storing goods are the only buildings that have been erected. The land is so poisoned with salt that it is doubtful if it will bear anything.

So this next phase is begun, and this lasts many, many years. Agriculture has precedence, and earth yields at first a scanty and half-rotten crop. Faust orders an army of men up, and sets them to bring down virgin soil from the downs, and the winding road is now never without its string of heavy carts coming down, and its empty carts going up.

The fourth or fifth year's crop is surprisingly better, and signs are abundant that to turn the valley into a fertile plain will only be a matter of trouble and time. Hardy trees are planted along the roads, and the look of aridity begins to disappear.

The building is taken up after the first year, and begins in homely fashion. A few farmhouses are erected for those who are working on the ground ; boundaries are marked out with hedges, and little streamlets brought from the nearest canal, and a narrow lane is made to connect the steading with the highroad. These homes are given as rewards to the best men among the first settlers, many of them by now men rich in experience and common-sense, but by their advancing age being rendered unfit for the rougher pioneer work. Their sons are left with them to toil under their supervision, and an instructor is sent to live on the farm for a year, when the owners are then left to manage their own affairs, with the land (still nominally Faust's), in reality theirs, to have and to hold, and not to render up or lose, except on condition that wilful and continued neglect of the property can be proved against them.

And now a younger and more intelligent generation begins to bear part of the burden of the work. These have

## CHAPTER XX

### THE THORN IN THE FLESH

WE have followed in outline the work done, and have glanced at the qualities gained by the author of the work. We have seen an emotional, impetuous dreamer develop the patience, accuracy, and application that are the necessary outfit for a student of the exact sciences. Now let us turn to the other side of the medal. There is never any great gain without some loss.

“Two souls, alas, are lodged within my breast,  
Which struggle there for undivided reign.  
One to the world with obstinate desire  
And closely cleaving organs still adheres ;  
Above the mist the other doth aspire  
With sacred vehemence to purer spheres.” (A. S.)

Each of these souls has to be fitly developed, though Faust would have ignored the lower one altogether in the days when the above words were spoken.

The life-breath of the higher self is *contemplation* ; that of the lower, *action*.

Few men are great enough to work through both sides of themselves (the inside and the outside) at the same time, so when one sees great progress on the part of one of the “souls,” it is pretty safe to infer stagnation, or even loss, for the other.

We have to develop them turn and turn about for many years before we can keep both in sweet-going order at the same time.

With knowledge of this law, Faust's teachers have chosen to follow the normal course, and have played in turn upon the contemplative and then upon the practical side of his nature, and during the last fifty years it is the latter part that has been under training.

This lower side—brain, thought, observation, and common-sense—was sadly behindhand and needed a sharp course of schooling, but it began growing when Faust set eyes on Marguerite, and now, with the last fifty years of activity, has become a creature with a fine fulness of stature.

But what of the higher self of vision and contemplation?

It closed its eyes as the cloud-form of Helena faded out of the sky, and as the sweet spirit-face of Marguerite passed into the invisible. *It has lain dormant through all these years of trenching and toiling.*

Truly the gain has been great but the loss threatens to be perilous.

Now for the last time let us turn to the historical under-current of the drama. The present parallel is a very easy one to draw.

We may take Act iv. as roughly symbolising those many revolutions (including the French Terror of 1793) which eventually won a "free soil for a free people."

The colony-period of the play, up to the scene we are now considering—an epoch of great material and physical prosperity and progress—we may take as shadowing forth the era of peace, and the material and scientific progress which followed on the heels of all that riot and bloodshed, and which has continued until now, the twentieth century.

We have gained a *great* deal, and are telling each other about it at all seasons and on all sides!

Politically we have representative government, individual freedom of action and thought, and protection from violence of both life and property. Then there are a thousand new facilities for communication and education. The poorest has a well-kept road to walk on, and the finest libraries

and museums of the world are open for him to enter. We care for our sick, whether rich or poor, and indeed the poor who go into public institutions may, in many cases, be better served than the rich who send for help to their homes. We give to our poor, perhaps partially, often unwisely, but still we give to an amount never dreamt of before except by single generous individuals ; and so on, and so on.

None but the purblind would deny how much we have gained, but many of the one-eyed, who are kings nowadays, would fain deny that we have lost anything. Yet in throwing off the tattered garments that we wore in the age of faith, we have thrown away some jewels that were concealed in its folds, and the spotlessly white robe of reason we have donned seems a little unfinished without these.

The spirit of humanity has come away from its cloud-land of dreams, and, spade in hand (so to speak), labours for the material welfare of the many. A glorious task ! But the spiritual welfare (temporarily put on one side) is suffering in the process.

A large proportion of England's best intellects, including some of her clergymen, are agnostic. The Bishop of London estimates the number of churchgoers as 5 per cent. of the total population. France is to a perhaps larger measure agnostic or atheistic. Italy is divided between an archaic form of Catholicism (professed chiefly by peasants and women) and the atheism of her neighbour. Germany appears to be keeping a fairly firm hold of dogma and domesticity superficially, but the spirit of materialism does not lack votaries or teachers there also.

(Spain, Austria, etc., do not form part of the new colony.)

We have lost ! There is no denying it. Lost in artistic power, in insight, in faith.

Imagine the modern commercial nations joining together for the pursuit of an ideal, which, when gained, would not bring with it any material advantage, either to themselves

or their allies! Imagine, if you can, a crusade in this twentieth century!

To come down to a much smaller, but a no less significant sign of the times. How many of our modern smoky, machinery-cursed, well-drained towns, have had sufficient soul to produce a cathedral?

In England we have built one—Truro—since 1258; it is still unfinished; and we have turned back to the models of the Middle Ages for our plan. (Westminster is being built by the empire, not the colony.)

Oh, we have lost! But perhaps the loss is only temporary; the material gain would seem to be permanent; and perhaps, like Faust, we shall one day be all the richer for having once lost. We may prize the ideal when regained more than we should have done if we had kept in sight of it all along the path. There are signs that the new century is already striving towards such a goal: perhaps it may leave us at its close once again in touch with the unseen things that are eternal, without having robbed us of many of those practical qualities so necessary for working in things temporal.

Does Goethe foreshadow this future for the nations, in the coming scene where the man solves the riddle of the dual life? Did he foresee a race who would learn to value truly both her inventors and her seers?

One never knows how much lies hidden beneath his melodious verses. We ever find in them truth up to the full measure of our capacity for receiving it, and often feel that greater capacity would have received greater dower of truth.

Here, then, we will leave the historical parallel, not touching upon it again, and, turning back to the drama, finish, unhindered, the "Story of Faust."

. . . . .

We left Faust pacing up and down his rose-garden in the evening light.

Suddenly the voice of the watchman from a hidden



tower cries that a galley is coming down the canal, and the old man stops and strains his eyes to see the boat, though it must be a small one to have been able to get through the lock which connects the canal system with the harbour. Some barge, perhaps, bringing merchandise from a newly arrived vessel, for much of the internal transport is effected by water.

No! As it draws nearer, one can dimly distinguish its lines. It is certainly not one of the ordinary barges; it is a tall, sea-going galley, but so narrow that with a little care it can be navigated up this still water-way. It is a boat of gaudy colouring and quaint and fantastic outlines and never built or owned by the colony.

Faust is sufficiently interested to leave the upper terrace and make his way down to the canal bank to meet the new arrival, losing sight of her at once, however, as he winds his way through the groves of scented trees that shade the steep short cut down the hill.

It is the crowning pleasure to this beautiful evening. Doubtless the boat brings something that has been much longed for. Faust has a hundred messengers out on sea-journeys and each should come back laden with objects of interest and value—maps of new lands, reports of the laws and customs of distant people, tales of adventure, sacks of new seeds, or tools, marbles, treasure, books—it depends which part the vessel has been sent to.

The voice of the watchman still calls on, overhead now, and as Faust comes out on the canal bank the strange ship draws silently and slowly up the stream, and shows as a clearly-cut silhouette, a black shadow-picture against the flaming sunset sky. The gold has gone out of the clouds, and the sun is sinking to rest in a blaze of brilliant scarlet, and the canal, reflecting this lurid colour, looks like a river of blood, along which this dark ship comes gliding.

The voice of the watchman ceases and another sound breaks in upon the stillness of the evening.

Cling-clang! cling-clang!—it is the little chapel bell which Philemon is ringing for the Angelus. Faust's face pales with anger, and his attention is momentarily withdrawn from the incoming vessel, and he glances darkly up at the southern cliffs and mutters to himself.

The voice of the watchman calls again. The galley is almost abreast now; she slackens her pace more and more, and finally comes to a stop close to where Faust is standing, while a man on the prow calls out to him cheerily.

The sun drops behind the hills, leaving the valley wrapped in a cold grey twilight, though the light still lingers for a while on the cliffs, investing the little sanctuary on the height with a golden aureole.

Faust has not answered the cheery greeting and the lines of annoyance on his face have deepened. It is Mephisto who has called out to him, and as the busy crew make fast the ship and throw out a gangway, this complacent person comes jauntily on to the shore, signing to his men to begin unloading the cargo at once, and continues with a more ceremonious greeting.

Faust answers with a gesture—it is courteous, but nothing more—and, turning round to the strange vessel, he seems to await an explanation. This is not the ship in which they sailed, nor do the goods which are being rapidly brought on shore seem to be the things for which he was dispatched.

Mephisto is voluble; the voyage has been an unhindered success; all that the enterprise now craves is a word of favour from the ruler.

The Devil waves his arm towards the harbour; they went forth with but two ships, they have returned with twenty, and heavily laden all of them. "How free the ocean makes a free spirit!" he goes on. "Scruples would seem to be a torment of the land. There, out at sea, the game is 'catch who can,' and so it chances that, fishing ever, we sometimes catch a fish, and sometimes net a ship. With three or four our own, a fifth is swiftly added, and

with a fleet of five it is not difficult to add a sixth. And might is right. I know the sailor-creed. Three names for the same thing—war ! commerce ! piracy ! ”

Faust is silent. He turns his back on the loquacious spirit and strides over to the sacks and boxes that are being piled upon the quay. A few minutes of inspection is enough to confirm the tale of horror and treachery which has just been lightly related. Gold cups, crosses, specie, jewellery—the stain of blood is literally apparent on the latter ; the same stain clings to the whole enterprise.

The sailors have stopped their work, awed by the fierce anger in Faust’s eyes, and now stand huddled together and muttering angrily at some distance when, having made his inspection, the ruler turns silently away and takes the path through the woods back to the upper terrace.

Mephisto watches him disappear, and with a light laugh bids the men replace the cargo and take it on to the usual landing-place. “ Have it arranged and grouped about the palace ; you’ll see he will admire it then. ”

The men obey, muttering and grumbling about the treatment they have received. Mephisto calms the rising mutiny with promises of ample reward, and leaves them to follow Faust’s footsteps.

It is to be noticed that when the Fiend joins him on the upper terrace, Faust utters no word of rebuke. Experience has shown that it is no use appealing to a moral sense that is non-existent ; the only thing to be done is to set to work at once to neutralise the harm done as swiftly as possible, and to keep this slippery servant close under his own eye in future. It has been a relief to have him absent for some years ; but he is more dangerous away than at hand.

Mephisto comes up lightly and with cool effrontery begins to chide his master with want of gratitude.

Faust merely changes the subject, but his scarcely suppressed anger works itself out in another direction. He interrupts the Devil’s long complimentary speech about his greatness and his power by the angry remark that,

despite that power so flatteringly called "world-wide," he is subject to a ceaseless and daily annoyance within a mile of his own palace, thwarted in his plans by a couple of stupid and obstinate old peasants.

It speaks volumes for Faust's gentleness that, surrounded by thousands who look up to him as a sort of demi-god, with none above him to criticise and control, and at a time when such a piece of high-handedness would merely have aroused popular admiration, that his wish to govern men by patience and kindness should have been sufficient to prevent his using the least force to gain possession of what is the only thing in sight that he desires and that is not his own to take.

What perfect wisdom and self-control it must have needed, by the way, especially in the earlier days of the colony, to distinguish between discipline and coercion—to use one weapon daily and hourly, and never to touch the other, when it would have instantly brought about the result required.

But human patience has its limits, and old age has its strong whims and fancies. Morning and evening, day in, and day out, has that small note of defiance rung in Faust's ears, till the irritation of it has so eaten into his life that daybreak and sunset have become a thing of dread.

That perpetual little reminder of thwarted ambition, that constant intrusion into his thoughts of those two people who have nothing for him but dislike and scorn, it would be galling even to a submissive man. To one of Faust's proud, restless temperament it is infuriating.

And so, at last, caught in an evil hour, he dallies with the Tempter.

Faust is no demi-god—let us be thankful for that—he is the picture of what man, mere man, can work up to. He is a whole-hearted human being, with many of the imperfections of humanity clinging to him, even to the hour of his death, but with such an ever-widening tide of love and sympathy and wise kindness welling up from his

heart, that this eventually drowns everything that is small and evil in his nature.

But the present is an evil hour. The dusk creeps on and it is not altogether a superstition that the power of darkness has less hold in the sunlight. Thoughts find shelter under cover of night that would not have been given house-room had the sun been shining.

Mephisto, too, is at Faust's elbow, and that past-master of argument puts the case skilfully, till it appears only half wrong ; then temporarily wrong, tending to a good end ; and finally, neither right nor wrong, but the only way out of the difficulty, and the best line of conduct for all concerned.

Once the old couple are moved, they will be so much happier in that new and larger farm that has for such a long time been kept vacant for them in the most sheltered part of the valley.

Age is conservative and obstructive ; youth fulfils its destiny in forcing its seniors out of the groove in which they are rotting, the gentle voice goes on.

And the dusk settles down upon the speakers, bringing with it a light white mist which obliterates the landmarks one by one, and covers the land with a grey sameness.

*As without, so within !* The outlines of right and wrong begin to lose their sharpness ; the Tempter spreads a light mist over warning lights and familiar landmarks, and Faust listens—and listens.

## CHAPTER XXI

### MEPHISTO'S DISMISSAL

SOME hours later Faust is still on the terrace, still watching—but alone. It is late, and since the voice of the watchman called out the last hour there has been complete silence. An almost unnatural stillness reigns over the place ; not a leaf is stirring.

A crescent moon is shining, and the valley is filled with a silver mist. Looking down, it would be impossible to say where the ocean ended and the new land began. The dream-sea of moonlit mist, and the real sea of moonlit water from this distance, are not to be distinguished. The spires and pinnacles of the larger buildings seem like islets rising out of the waves ; the meadowland and the farms are hidden, engulfed. The effect is weird, and ominous ; it is a prevision, a hint of a possible reality.

But on the terraces the air is clear. Faust looks up and up, into the unfathomable depths of star-sprinkled space, till his eyes tire, and his mind shrinks back from the bare vastness of things celestial, and comes down for comfort to its earthly surroundings. These are fair enough. The heavily-scented white cup-flowers are making night fragrant, and the trees are drawing vague and wonderful traceries on the marble flags, while the palace on the hillside is more than ever like a fairy building under the light of this pale young moon.

A dream of grey, that little-understood colour of many overtones ; and by night, as by day, but one thing mars

the perfectness of the picture. On the headland to the south there is a point of yellow light. It is an intrusion into this world of delicate nuances, a crude splash of garish colour, a blot on the soft dream-like beauty of the night.

The ruler of this wide territory leans, a silent figure, upon the marble balustrade, his eyes fixed upon that one point.

. . . . .

The watchman calls again. It is the half-hour. And again there is, as his voice dies away, the same absolute silence.

A little breeze springs up from the south, a languid, gentle young daughter of the winds : everything is so still that any sound will carry for miles.

. . . . .

The hours of the quiet night pass on, when before the regular interval the voice of the watchman calls again, and the cry is an alarm—FIRE ! FIRE !

No one answers. The silent figure on the terrace does not move.

Who has taken such good care that all in the palace should sleep so soundly on this summer night ?

. . . . .

Again and again the watchman gives the alarm. It is for him to call, not to leave his post, for his call may have been heard and the answering signal forgotten while the help so urgently needed is being given.

Moreover, the fire is distant. It is up on the headland, having attacked the isolated cottage perched on the edge of the cliff. The little building is burning fiercely, and the flames are spreading to the adjoining chapel. Soon voices and cries are heard, and the crackling of wood and the crashing of branches as the tall linden trees begin to

burn and to play their part in the destruction of the home that they once sheltered. Evidently the fire has been seen by others, and help is being rendered.

Sound carries marvellously on this still night on the wings of the little wind that is blowing from the cottage down towards the palace.

The watchman still calls on, as long as from his tower he can see what is occurring on the heights, but the dense smoke from the burning straw and the damp wood of the trees drifts along the current of the breeze. The pungent smell of wood-smoke is distinctly noticeable now upon the terraces, effacing the heavy, sensuous scent of the white blossoms, and soon wisps of it descend and blot out portions of the distant scene, and blur the outlines of things near at hand.

Still Faust does not move !

An accidental fire, a gallant rescue, then a gift of a new farm in the valley to replace the ruined home upon the heights. Apparently this is the scheme that Mephisto has evolved. It is not an honest method of procedure—that could hardly have been expected from one so twisted and crooked—but at least it is fair-seeming and diplomatic but not honest.

Faust moves uneasily. He has given his servant but a bare consent for the removal of the old couple, and has added the one condition that there shall be no coercion and no violence ; that as much gentleness is to be shown as the case will allow. He now begins to wonder whether the condition will be as strictly fulfilled as the original order, but so far Mephisto had never disobeyed a direct order.

The wood-smoke comes down in clouds upon the terrace now ; the cottage in its fall has blotted out the prospect of the whole of the new kingdom : the second picture-warning of the night. The watchman is silent.

. . . . .



A couple of hours pass, when the stillness of the night is rudely broken by a trampling of many feet—men coming up the hill. Mephisto shouts up to his master from below, as he comes to a stop below the balcony upon which Faust is leaning. He is breathless with haste and very apologetic.

Things, he says, went badly with them. The scheme has somewhat miscarried. They hammered at the door, could get no hearing; then they broke in, and began to turn the old people out, when one of them fell down and died. There was a stranger there, too, who fought against them, and he got killed. And somehow, in the struggle, the fire got scattered—set the straw alight—and——

Faust interrupts with terrible anger; he grips the marble with his hand till the irregularities of the stone are marked on the flesh, and, drawn up to his full height, he towers over those below, with flashing eyes and vehement words cursing them and their deed, bidding them bear the guilt of such inhumanity, and share the spoils of such a sin. He is brief, but terrible; and then, turning to the Devil, *he speaks the word of eternal dismissal to this powerful but perilous slave.*

Mephisto glances at him with incredulous surprise, draws back a few paces, away from the storm that he has roused; waits some minutes within sight for the recall that does not come, and then signs lightly to his companions, who follow him, grumbling and muttering, out of sight.

Left alone, Faust stretches out his hands in anguish. That he, the father of his people, should have instigated such a deed!

The waving smoke seems to him to be suddenly filled with haunting shadows—accusing ghosts. Are they unborn sins, which he will some day bring to life, or are they the dazed, wretched spirits of those so recently and roughly torn from life?

Everywhere, as he turns away, he sees these menacing forms drifting towards him ; they advance, they pursue ; and, with a gesture of despair, he turns round at last and walks away rapidly in the direction of the palace, the twisting, writhing wisps of smoke ever following him.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE DARKNESS BEFORE THE DAWN

STRICKEN and bowed down with remorse, the man does not stop till he has gained his own inner sanctum and, passing in, has bolted the door behind him. There is still no sound in the palace. Mephisto must have taken good care that none should wake to help or hinder.

Faust lights his lamp, glancing furtively round the room as it burns up ; once more assures himself that the door is securely barred, and then sinks quivering into a chair.

His vigorous health seems to have dropped from him like a fallen mantle. The animal self must have taken his powers with him at his dismissal, for Faust is bent and shrunk ; the few minutes have aged him as if they had been years. The house of the flesh is falling to pieces about him, all the strength that is left now will be solely his own ; fictitious aid, and fictitious physical vigour have been suddenly withdrawn.

Those who have not been weak unto death will not believe how much of our courage resides in the body, but those who have gone into the valley of that shadow will need no reminding ; it is not a lesson that is lightly forgotten.

And now round Faust in this hour of utter weakness gather grim shadows that would tempt him to despair and to destruction. We need not think twice to see whose progeny they are, remembering the Fiend who stood at Gretchen's elbow and told her she was for ever lost.

This night will put to test his innate powers, and Faust seems to have an intuition of the coming struggle and to fear it. It is indeed no light thing to have defied and cast off the Prince of this world, for he has great powers and skilled and willing helpers.

Four grey spectres have been sent on the wings of the wind and are mingling with and drawing strength from the smoke that rises from so evil a flame. Faust's eyes are opening again to things beyond the physical, in which he has been immersed for so many years; he has seen them as he fled within his palace. They have followed as far as the walls of his refuge, but no further as yet. Distorted shadows from a region of evil night, they seem half to fear the errand on which they have been sent, and whimper and wail outside the white moonlit walls, delaying their entrance.

They have thin, drawn, evil faces; these spectres now crouching upon the steps of the great white palace. There is stark Want, mother of crime, but powerful only among those who starve.

There is another whose face apes that of the grand, wise Goddess Destiny, but whereas the goddess sits unravelling the tangled threads of life and ever weaving them into something better than before, this creature carries chains with which she binds tremulous humanity. There is a third with bent head: cowering Guilt, a paralysing power who will not let her victim work to retrieve the sin that he has wrought, but keeps him with eyes fixed upon the past till he sinks back into it.

They fear to enter, these three fierce Sisters of the Night; they feel that they have little power over the man who sits within. But a fourth figure comes out of the mist and passes them, gliding into the palace, and they watch and whisper her name and leave to her the task they are unable to cope with.

They, these evil things, rise with crooning cries from their crouching position at the palace doors, and with opened

arms drift up into the mist from which they descended, whispering that they go to call their brother whose name is DEATH !

. . . . .

And within Faust sits in his spacious room, a place filled with treasures from all quarters of the earth, conscious of but one desire, that the lamp may burn brightly :—he fears the darkness.

The glitter of all the wealth that surrounds him has but one advantage in his eyes at the present moment, that metal and marble reflect the light ; otherwise the damp walls and dusty shelves of his old cell would have been more in accordance with his mood, for whatever his eye lights upon he only sees it as dust and ashes, ashes and dust.

His mind dwells upon the phantoms who dogged his footsteps to the entrance. "There were four who followed, but three who passed away. They spake together—the hollow echo of their voices reached me—they whispered low of destiny, and then of death ! death ! and I have not gained my freedom yet."

Not thus with a word, in a fit of anger, can the long-attendant Devil be sent away, dismissed as one might dismiss a troublesome slave. Many and close were the ties which once bound this master and subject together, and the chains are some of them not yet broken. Mephisto may return as tyrant where he was sent away as serf. None knows this better than the man now speaking.

"Ah, could I but unlearn all spells and incantations," he groans, "divest myself of all entanglements of magic, and stand before thee then, O Nature, clothed in plain manhood, thus were it worth one's while to be a man. But I, alas, have cursed this world, and now these curses fill the air with haunting shapes."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noticing, merely as one man's experience, Goethe's magic. *It was a subject he had studied!*

The coming hours are to witness the bringing into effect of all those causes sent forth on that distant night of the signing of the compact. No force is ever lost ; the immensity which did not answer, yet heard, and ever repays evil for evil, good for good.

“ It knows not wrath nor pardon. Utter-true  
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs.  
Times are as naught. To-morrow it will judge,  
Or after many days.”

*(Light of Asia.)*

It is “ after many days ” in this case that the curse-laden force comes home ; but the evil returns without having lost a fraction of its power and there remains but to see whether the man has in the meantime gained strength sufficient to resist, or whether the tremendous rebound of his past action will utterly crush and destroy him.

The curse and the compact ! He is not to be reminded of the latter as yet ; but the former has come home, and no lamp will clear the darkness that gathers in the corners of the room, no light banish those whispering shapes that lurk there ready to spring.

The senseless curse—how he remembers it ! It was hurled against all things that made life fair, and lured the soul to bide senselessly within this sphere of woe. It was flung out against all natural, helpful joys. He cursed all earthly possessions : the fair lands which a man owns and which teach him to love the sweet brown soil, and to have a sense of comradeship with the trees and the flowers, the stones and the running brooks, amongst which he has grown up.

He cursed all pleasure of hearth and home : the affection of the servants who have given their work and interest to those whom they serve ; the clinging fingers of the little children ; the strong love of the wife.

He cursed even wealth, as the desire for it breeds energy, incites to daring deeds, and the possession of it gives leisure and times of sweet peace and healthful pleasure.

He cursed fame, glory, self-reverence, patience, faith, and bitterest of all his curse fell upon the crowning gift—LOVE.

He called upon this life to show herself for the cheat that she was, and to masquerade no longer.

And one creature answered his summons, the *false* Prince of this World, whose real kingdom is in outer darkness, while Nature, *true* goddess of this life, heard, remembered—and was silent.

Yet the two who heard both taught him. The first out of his attempted evil unwillingly, unwittingly, bringing forth good; and the other out of the fulness of her heart sharing somewhat of her life with one of her sullen, ignorant children.

How much better he knows the goddess now, as he cries out that could he but stand before her in plain, unsullied manhood, that were a fate worthy of him.

Wise Mother Nature! He has seen much of her since then. True, she has her moods of seeming harshness and cruelty, but are we to say that less severity would have brought to pass what was required? We know that she only works for the bettering of the races that cling about her skirts. Faust looks back upon the people that he has toiled to train. They have taught him perchance as much as he has taught them. His views in the light of recent experience as to the useless brutality of Nature's goads and spurs have undergone a radical change. He measures the small progress made with material already largely shaped for his handling; he recalls the weary striving of many years; wonders if what has been gained at so great a cost will be strong to endure even for a little while; and Nature's task of making green worlds from the dust of the stars, and mankind from the dust of the ground, makes him faint with wonderment.

Great, busy Mother Nature! "Quietude is inconceivable to her and she has laid her curse upon rest." Her wages for the stagnation of idleness or uselessness are DEATH.

Still her fiat is but an echo of the angel's chorus: "Let but a soul toil on, toil ever, (only) to such we bring a loosening of his bonds."

So Nature<sup>1</sup> "tosses her creatures out of nothingness and tells them not whence they came or whither they go. It is their business to run; she knows the road," and "she shakes man until he attempts to soar."

Moreover, all the good she *can* give, she gives, and with unstinting hand. She punishes tremendously, but she praises royally. She is content, nay more, *wishful*, that we should rejoice in her and with her.

*Is she a cheat?* If to cheat means to practise illusion, then perchance. "She rejoices in illusion. Whoso destroys it in himself or in others, him she punishes with the severest tyranny," but with what divine wisdom! We need illusion as we need the softening air; where would our sunlight be without it? Imagine humanity cowering under a black pall, dotted by glaring wheels of fire.

Is she altogether a show —maya? Partly, perhaps. She may be, as the earth-spirit sang, but the living garment, or the shrouding mask by whose aid alone we perceive the Godhead. But the garment or the mask is made of plastic material, it reveals the contour of the underlying curves. Let us grant that from the standpoint of the absolute she is "vanity of vanities," but "not to us to whom she has made herself of the greatest of importance" and behind that relatively real which now concerns us, most presently and most intimately, hides that absolutely real, which shall concern us hereafter. "Ye who will journey to the infinite, the way lies through the finite that surrounds you."

Faust, wiser and greater than he was, sees this now, and testifies that there are but two safe places for humanity: on earth, in the bosom of Mother Nature; or in heaven, on the heart of the Father. Yet it was he who cursed the Eternal Mother, and then set out to find the Father with his back to her.

<sup>1</sup>"Aphorisms on Nature," Goethe.



And the wise and gentle mother delayed his punishment till her child should be strong enough to face it, wise to learn from it, and, taking him by the hand, taught him in the meantime the depths of those common things which he ignorantly spurned.

*Human love!* Who loved woman better than Faust loved Marguerite, after her death had opened his eyes to her worth?

*Children!* Fate denied him these, but we have only to remember Faust's tenderness for his dream-son Euphorion to see how he would have cherished them.

*Possessions!* Faust loves each *inch* of the soil that he has won, with a particular affection. Each tree, each field, is eloquent, is a souvenir, a memento of some struggle or some victory.

*Fame! Glory!* The memory that he shall leave among his people is one of the things nearest to his heart, the ruling thought that comes out in the very minute of death. He would be among them, centuries hence, if he could, in memory, and he rejoices that the traces of his earthly day are destined to endure till then.

Ah yes! Faust is growing content to be a man at last!

His recollection goes back to those scenes with the glorious earth-spirit—they are fresh in his mind, as if that morning's dew still lay upon the grass.

Those lessons of the underlying meaning of familiar things, the mystery laid deep in the heart of "all that lives"; and "all that lives" comprising the great whole. No absence of life even in the stones, for "those who cannot see Nature everywhere, see her nowhere rightly."

Yes! Faust is content now to acknowledge the living wisdom of Nature, goddess of this life—AND IT IS AT THIS TIME THAT HIS CURSE COMES HOME TO HIM!

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE DARKNESS AND THE DAWN

So Faust sits shivering amid the desolate grandeur of his palace, and the lamp burns ever more and more feebly, or else the thin fumes, with their scent of burning, that are filtering in through every chink and cranny, obscure its light.

Faust fears the darkness and the loneliness horribly; but, bound by a sort of waking nightmare, he seems incapable either of moving to get a better light, or rising to call for the help and companionship of which he stands in such desperate need.

No one can enter, for he bolted the door securely—he is sure of that. Yet to his unhinged nerves and disordered senses the door seems now to swing slowly open, and then as silently and slowly to close again, though nothing visible has moved it, or has come in.

He leans forward, scarcely breathing.

“Is there anyone here?”

A voice replies, a muffled, barely audible voice, but the thing that spoke is close at hand, even if not visible.

“Thy question must be answered by a yes.”

“Who art thou?” gasps Faust.

“What matter? I am here.”

“Depart!”

“Nay. This is my appointed place.”

Faust is roused to an anger which momentarily overcomes his fear. He swings round in his chair to face the

direction from which the voice is coming, and is about to speak. Suddenly his expression changes and he quietly resumes his former position.

"Take heed unto thyself and use no magic," he murmurs.

There is silence for awhile in the half-lit room, and then the muffled voice takes up its tale.

"Even should the ear refuse to hear me, the heart will know my presence and will tremble."

Faust will not answer.

"Clothed in many forms, I exercise my powers, equally upon the land and on the sea, haunting all men on all their paths of life. Dost thou not recognise me?" Hast thou not known me? I am CARE!"

The thing has named itself and half the horror has gone, but it is indeed an evil and a potent spirit, one that has the power to sap the life and beauty out of all those healthful joys which Faust once spurned.

Is the spectre so familiar that it seems to you a rather small power of evil? Small things that stay, wreck more than the raging force that blusters and passes on.

Small things! It was the ringing of a small bell, day in and day out, that led the wise and just ruler into an act of foulest injustice after many stainless years.

Carking care working silently and persistently is ALL-POWERFUL! It wears away love; it wears away faith; it wears away life—as dropping water wears away a stone.

Faust is contemptuous of his adversary; the power seems small to him. He takes up the question, but in replying seems more as if talking to himself than replying to the intruder. Care has touched him very lightly so far; he does not realise its might; life has gone too quickly for him to be haunted by this "ghost of buried pain, ennui."

"I have hurried—raced through my life," he says reflectively. "I have taken every pleasure as it came.

I have thrown aside what did not satisfy, and have not turned down bypaths to pursue aught that escaped me. I have only craved, enjoyed, accomplished, and then passed on to new desires."

Joy and sorrow, agony and ecstasy but, until now, no pause into which care could enter.

"I have stormed through life with might. It was grand at first, but now the power slackens, the current begins to run slowly, feebly."

He continues after a pause: "The whole cycle of life is now familiar to me."

The muffled voice assents. It is at these times the spectre makes its appearance—the pioneer knows nothing of this power.

"I have experienced the fulness of the life of earth; there is no more to conquer; and the life beyond is ever hidden—the passage barred relentlessly that leads towards our knowledge of it."

Strange words for the lover of Helena, for the wanderer who reached to the very heart of things, and saw the eternal mothers! But half a century has passed since then, and during those fifty years all Faust's activity has flowed into material channels, and the spiritual senses have been asleep. We cannot work, with power, along opposing ways at the same time.

There is another reason, however, for the closed heavens—THE RETURNING CURSE. In the night of the compact, when the Devil explained that though *here* he would toil and slave, *yonder* things would be otherwise, Faust answered contemptuously that here was the sun that shone upon his griefs, and yonder should not "disturb his calculations."

"Cure me my woes, and I will ask no more, of who shall serve or who shall rule in *yonder* sphere."

ALL that he prayed for is to be given him and much has been given already. He has tasted of the fulness of this life and of its bitterness. The prayer of his better

self for more wisdom has been partly satisfied (there is yet more to come in this direction), and the desire of his worse self that "yonder shall not disturb my calculations" has also brought its reply. For fifty years *yonder* has not disturbed him in any way. Prayers have powers, perhaps beyond our dreaming.

Fifty years of spiritual sleep! Perhaps Faust has now come to look upon Helen as a dream without substance or meaning, and to think of the episode of the mothers as a singular but beautiful hallucination. That side of his nature is arid from neglect.

But what of the wisdom and gentleness that the man gathered from his earthly experiences? Are these to be without avail?

No, indeed! They are the saving force in this present hour of peril and despair. Faust begins speaking again—

"The man that stands still like a stock, blinking at the clouds, is and remains a fool"—his voice softens—"but this world need not be void of sense and beauty to the wise. We have no need to strain ourselves to reach the infinite; we can go on—go on, filling the hours of our earthly day, learning from all the things that are about us—things which are visible and tangible and adapted to our cognition. We can go on—go on, though still unsatisfied, still yearning, yet unhindered by superstition, untroubled by haunting shades."

And Care answers in an undertone.

It is pathetic to tears, this confession of the dying man, this review which he takes of a life that has lasted three quarters of a century under abnormally advantageous conditions, and which has never once brought him a moment of unalloyed happiness. Earth's story stale and heaven as out of reach as in the far beginning.

The muffled voice recalls him to the present. "He whom I haunt shall never find the world well worth his proving."

Faust's thoughts go back to the world around him. He will go on—go on ; but all paths are familiar by now, the pioneer work is over.

The voice continues : "I will come between that man and every other thing. His senses shall be perfect, yet he shall live in silence, live in darkness, seeing naught, and hearing not a sound. He may possess all treasures that bring joy, bring wealth, bring sorrow—these shall still not touch him. He shall remain as though he hungered for them, and indecision and fear shall hang upon his movements and cloud his thoughts."

Faust breaks into speech to drown the monotonous tones. "I will not listen to thy raving ; it might pervert the wisest of mankind. Depart ! Be silent !"

Has the voice ceased even for a moment ? If so, it recommences instantly, for as the echo of his words die away, the moaning cadence is still heard.

"Indecision shall hang upon his movements. Shall he go, or shall he stay—he knows not."

Faust starts up with a gesture of despair. The voice continues unmoved—

"A burden to himself, a burden to his kind, his sleep no rest—his——"

Truly this haunting thing is a spirit of power.

"Thus it is paved—the way that leads to hell."

To hell indeed, to the lowest hell ; not to the place of temporary punishment, but to that kingdom of outer darkness, the home of stagnation and disintegration—to the second death !

Should this evil thing prevail over a man, the victim's inmost life is slowly and gradually drawn out of him ; that "WILL TO ASPIRE," which is the spark of Godhead, gradually smothered, and finally extinguished ; and then the suffering form, bare of such life, is flung upon the dust-heap of the world, there miserably to decay, returning to the elements from which it came.

Mephisto has sent his most powerful helper to subdue this ardent spirit, and Faust's curse has furnished it with the power to strike him. The view above is hidden by his own past wish ; the view about him by their power shall be shrouded too—*he shall be cut off from all that he rashly cursed !*

The voice has ceased. The word "hell" echoes round the room and seems to be taken up and repeated again and again by the shades that haunt its dark angles and corners. Faust knows his enemy at last.

"Ill-omened spectre," he cries despairingly, "'tis thou that bringest a thousand, thousand evils upon mankind. The task is hard indeed to free one's spirit from *thy* fetters!"

He springs up, and begins to pace restlessly up and down the room.

"Thou creeping terror, hear" ; and he comes to a sudden stop, facing the unseen thing. "Hear! I vow I *will not* be thy victim, will never bend beneath thy power, acknowledge thy dominion. Never! never!"

The defiant voice rings out gloriously in the midst of the evil darkness. There is a restless quivering amongst those haunting shapes that fill the dusky air, but the unseen thing that spoke has no fear of brave words.

"Some men are blind through all their lives," answers the voice monotonously. "Take now my curse as I depart—be thou Faust, blind as they."

A malign breath passes over Faust's face, and he stretches out his hands with a cry, for all the things that surround him are in a moment swallowed up in complete darkness. The shades have vanished, but he knows it not, and in this utter darkness he gropes his way moaning till he touches the great chair, and then sinks into it a broken man.

It is the hour of his judgment! The cup of agony must be drunk to the last bitter drop ; deep indeed is this internal night into which he has been plunged.

Nature the Glorious does not extend her empire beyond this world ; she knows of nothing that is beyond that grave

which Faust now sees so close before him on his path, and even in this world a thousand chances may shut us out from all communion with her. We must go out to her. She cannot come in to us and we pass out through five gateways, all or any of which may be closed. One of the widest portals has just been roughly shut, and there is a hint of further restrictions to come. Nature has her glories and her limits. Faust has experienced the former and reached the latter, and this seems to be his worst and last failure, the end of the final hope. The Resources of Nature are exhausted. The Powers of Spirit are hidden and he is again beaten back to the beginning of the Way.

Each failure has taught Faust much, but the thing he vainly seeks he has not even seen. We can imagine him repeating that despairing cry—

"Where are those breasts on which all heaven and all earth are hanging and are satisfied, while I am here a-hungered and a-thirst?"

And he has sought so persistently, so ceaselessly. In the south, the land of desire; in the north, the land of darkness and magic; in the east, amid the glittering deserts of the intellectual realm; and in the west, the dreamy country of the ideal. Where to turn next? Above is bare space, and beneath the familiar earth is wrapped in blank darkness.

The hour of judgment is running to its end; the dawn is near, though in his darkness he knows it not; and he is judged, not by his emotions, not by any passing belief or disbelief in this the day of his death, or in any other day of his long life. He has erred often in thought and often in action. Both are sins against the law, and for these sins he has paid the penalty and they are over and done with. In his judging one thing is counted—HE HAS SHOWN ENDURING ASPIRATION.

So long as a man strives he must strive now wisely,



now uselessly, now with great unwisdom but, like Nature, all that Nature's God demands is that he *shall* strive, and that without ceasing and so he shall gain salvation.

Blind, ill, dying, the broken man still struggles now, still tries to beat off the darkness, and after what must seem to him an eternity of agony he lifts his head slowly and as slowly speaks.

"The night is deep about me—the darkness heavy—but *FROM WITHIN* a light is breaking that bathes my spirit in glory."

Experience (that outer court) has had its day; now comes the opening of the inner eyes, and in future he will be guided by unerring power and *INSIGHT*!

Neither above, nor beneath, nor in any of the four quarters of the earth, but *WITHIN* each soul dwells truth!

You will find this remark about Truth in almost every page of the Eastern scriptures: "Whoso seeks it shall find it (being grown perfect) in himself"; and again: "Whoso hath laid aside desire and fear . . . sees in the quiet light of verity, eternal, safe, majestic, his soul!" One English poet puts it at some length—

"Truth is *within* ourselves; it takes no rise  
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.  
There is an inmost centre in us all  
Where truth abides in fulness, and around,  
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,  
This perfect clear perception which is truth.  
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh  
Binds it and makes all error—and to know  
Rather consists in opening out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
Than in effecting entry for a light  
Supposed to be without. . . ."

(*Paracelsus*, BROWNING).

Faust is silent for awhile; that which he has sought for so long has at last been found, and it is only after a long

silence that he rises at last feebly and unsteadily and with outstretched arms crosses the room to find the door.

He must go and finish his work, for the time is short ; the glory will not pass away, will rather help him to complete his task ; and the bowed and trembling man passes out of the room and feels his way down the long wide corridors.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MEPHISTO'S REVENGE

THERE is but one short scene more on earth, and we will hasten through it, eager to pass onward and upwards with Faust through that portal called death.

There is but one fleeting shadow-scene between us and that consummation.

Mephisto, dull spirit, who does not yet know that he has lost for ever all shadow of power over the bright soul, stands in a large outer court of his palace and directs a band of misshapen creatures in a strange task.

It is very dark, the moon has long set, the smoke still hangs about the place, and the torches which the repulsive beings are carrying shed but little light on the scene.

Part prophet, in virtue of his power on the psychic plane, the Devil knows that this night will decide Faust's fate, and is preparing for what he looks upon as a certain result.

One of the foul creatures suddenly lies at full length upon the turf in the centre of the court. The others, with obscene song and wild laughter, measure the space he occupies upon the ground. *They are preparing a grave for a condemned man!*

The rattle of their tools and the sound of their voices attracts Faust as he gropes along the corridors of his home, and, guided by the laughter and noise, he comes out at a large door that leads into the square, not knowing where

his feet have led him, and imagining that it must be day, and that he has come upon one of the numerous bands of labourers always at work in some part of the estate. He stands for a moment at the head of the steps, a kindly smile upon his face, his sightless eyes turned on the deepening grave.

"How it rejoices one to hear the clattering sounds of toil! The barren waves ever thus being defeated of their prey, the earth made fertile—for this it is I labour ceaselessly."

"Rather for us that thou art labouring," mutters a voice—the speaker is hidden in the shadow—"labouring to make a carnival for the unchained devils of the deep. Ruin, unseen, in front of thee in each direction."

It is a malign prophecy, not to be fulfilled. Mephisto has the gift of prevision, but often the mental picture appears to him distorted or reversed.

Faust stands where he is for a moment, the flickering torches casting a faint light on the fine old head, with those pathetic, sightless eyes. The work has ceased; something in his aspect has awed the misshapen spirits that laughed so loudly over their task.

He now comes down the steps towards them slowly, hesitatingly, feeling his way by the marble balustrade, and then first seems to remember the object of his coming.

"Overseer," he calls authoritatively.

A well-known figure comes out of the shadow and stands facing him; the half-made grave yawns between them. "Here," answers Mephisto with sardonic courtesy.

Faust does not recognise the voice; he imagines himself talking to one of the heads in the army of labour, and begins giving a series of rapid and concise directions. One thing is affecting the health of the colony and must be seen to immediately. A marsh is being formed by a sluggish little stream which wanders about the plain for

some distance before it empties itself into the harbour. It must be seen to, the evil remedied, and the work is to be done quickly, for the time is short.

"Drain now this stagnant pool," says the ruler; "collect a crowd of men, get extra help, offer a good reward; if needful, even compel—the time is short. Bring me reports about the moat you make, its length from day to day."

"Its length." Mephisto looks down at the grave at his feet and mutters: "The information I received spake not of trenches, but of another style of excavation."

Faust continues dreamily: "Ah! I would furnish soil to millions if I could, in ever pushing back the barren sea. Such land would never be without its dangers, but still it would be free and fertile, and men would live on it in freedom and in peace. Within our boundary of stone, this country is as fair as Paradise; the waves beat impotently up against the barrier, and all unite to keep that barrier strong. This is the core of wisdom—*freedom and life; but only given to those who earn those blessings day by day!*"

(How his ideals have changed since the days of the old cell. His original kingdom, if constructed then, would have been ruled from books and parchments, and supervised and overseen and ordered down to the smallest detail by officialdom of some sort. Now he gives his people a common danger that they may remain united, and leaves them to *earn* and *learn* the rest from Nature and experience. There must, of course, have been some more detail than this; would that Goethe had told us much about the laws and customs of his colony; but the bare outline is grand, and is wisdom and simplicity<sup>1</sup> itself, is indeed a reflection of God's way of teaching His children).

Faust, thinking over the past and the future of his people, has forgotten those that are standing about him; has forgotten even his own blindness, his inward vision busy

<sup>1</sup> See note at end of volume (p. 342).

watching such living pictures that appear before it in quick succession. He speaks again after a while. "Thus, ringed round with danger, a vigorous race shall spend its life upon this land : youth, manhood, and sturdy age. And in the future—ah ! I fain would stand among that throng of many millions—free people dwelling on free soil. THEN WOULD I BID THE PASSING MOMENT STAY, saying it was so fair, so fair."

Again, how his ideals have changed ! The impetuous soul that would have snatched at the golden fruits of Paradise, and dreamed of ruling all earth, and scaling the steps of heaven to live co-equal with the gods, asks but one thing—that, when time shall bring forth a full harvest from what he has sown, he may stand among the people and be a witness and a sharer of their joys.

*And the prayer is granted ; for that moment there comes before him a clear and certain vision of that future of which he dreams ; and his spirit, outrunning his epoch, stands and watches the harvest of its work.*

"I can foresee the issue," cries the dreamer—"I can foresee. It will not perish ; its effects will last for many centuries—fair, so fair !"

How different the reality from the vision ; and yet, strange paradox, the vision is real, and the seeming reality is but a passing shadow-scene, a senseless mummery.

Faust comes forward till he is within a foot of the open grave. Mephisto leans towards him, evil eagerness lighting up his dark face. Will his victim pronounce those fatal words that sound his doom ?

"Fair, so fair ! It is stable, the vision shows it stable. Ah, such sure foreknowledge is pure delight ! Oh moment, thou that passest now—STAY ! THOU ART PERFECT !"

There is a sudden exclamation from the watching Fiend, and Faust falls forward on the grass, and lies there motionless.

For a second or two after the man has fallen, no one

moves. Mephisto has drawn back a pace or two; and stands looking down at the huddled mass a little doubtfully—the evil band watch his face for a further order.

Faust has indeed bidden the passing moment stay and has paid the penalty with the death of the body, but what of the spirit that will soon free itself from that broken tenement of clay? Mephisto remembers uneasily the dead man's rendering of the compact.

"If, with the powers at thy command, thou canst so flatter and beguile me, that at some distant day I sink to rest, contented with myself, may that day be my last! If (thus) I shall ever call the passing moment fair, and bid it tarry, then heap thy chains upon me, thy service at an end, and mine begun."

He has bidden the passing moment tarry, and Mephisto has been freed from service by the sudden death; but what made that moment so supremely fair? The whole incident is beyond Mephisto's comprehension—he is honestly puzzled.

"No pleasure could ever satisfy him," he says at last aloud, contemptuously, "always pursuing mad, fantastic visions; and at the last he clings to and bids tarry the emptiest, sorriest moment of his life. He withstood me stoutly, but time has conquered, as it conquers all things. The clock stands still."

"Stands still!" echo the repulsive band. "Stands still! The index falls!"

"It falls," answers their master. "It is finished."

"It is past," chant the chorus, and they lay hands upon the body in its purple robes and drag it into the grave.

Mephisto watches them. "Past! A foolish word; for past and nothingness are one. What is the use of all this great creative force that never rests? All that it makes slips by into the past—of what avail then that it once existed? And still the force goes on in endless circles, as if some good might one day come of it; and

all things slip away into that nothingness, the past. I should prefer the quiet of an eternal void."

He turns away, and the creatures begin to sing again over their task, keeping time to the digging.

*Solo:* "Who hath made the house so ill,  
With shovel and with spade?"

*Chorus:* For thee, dull guest in hempen vest,  
It all too well was made.

*Solo:* Who can so ill have decked the hall,  
No chairs or tables any?

*Chorus:* 'Twas borrowed to return at call,  
The creditors were so many." (A. S.)

The gloomy court begins to fill with spectators. Mephisto has drawn away from the diggers and has begun a long strange chant, half cry, half call, accompanied by fantastic but significant gestures. He is calling to the legions of hell to come forth and drag another human soul to its doom; and from all parts and quarters come strange cries and moaning as his subjects hear and respond.

The ground opens within a foot of the grave, and smoke and flames come out of the chasm. The past-master of magic is creating what he imagines to be effective scenery, and from all sides come the *dramatis personæ*, fiends of all degrees of hideousness and repulsiveness — dwarfed, stout creatures that run along the ground; lean, tall ones that climb the pillars and look down upon the scene and jeer and gibber; devils with horns, devils with claws, and hoofs instead of feet; and all these crowd round the grave, jostling each other in the murky atmosphere to gain a view of the placid face of the dead.

The scene is grotesque and somewhat repulsive, but there is nothing fearful or terrible. These things are only the riff-raff that follow at the heels of the animal self, creatures which perhaps Faust may have fed with some



chance unclean thoughts, and have thus given power to come and peer and mock at him for awhile.

So the crowd dances and makes mouths at the silent form, now that it is laid in its last home ; and the clear-cut, severe outlines of the face, which gleams whitely against the pillow of dark earth on which it has been laid, annoys the deformed, misshapen onlookers. There is a calm dwelling on the face of perfect symmetry, which they resent, and which they cannot shake, and they are vaguely restless and would hasten, if they could, the inevitable decay which will efface those noble lines.

They do no harm ; the lifeless body cannot hear them, and the newly-freed spirit which still lingers about its home is asleep and dreaming ; its acts are automatic and unconscious.

And now, as the frenzied crowd laughs and screams, the clear-cut face of the dead begins to show yet more clearly and there is a light that shimmers on the long purple robes which, in mockery, they have arranged so carefully about him.

The crowd does not notice, but Mephisto looks up, and then a shaft of light strikes the grave, bringing the quiet figure in bright prominence and making the shadowy crowd seem not merely dim, in contrast, but unreal.

The light gains in intensity and as it brightens and broadens, illuminating the turf about the grave, the evil things cover their eyes and slink back before it ; and still the light gains in power, and down its white waves comes a shower of half-opened rosebuds, which fill the grave till the purple robes are hidden. And the dark creatures snarl and retreat into dark corners ; and still the light pursues them, till the whole court is ablaze with the strange radiance and is further empty, save for Mephisto.

He stands his ground though flinching under the blinding radiance and calls to his followers, storming and raging at them for their cowardice ; but they will not hear.

Then down the ladder of light come glowing forms of flame and Mephisto calls to them too, and reviles them. For awhile the radiance tarries round the rose-strewn grave and then, at some signal, the protecting cloud of light drifts upwards, the figures taking with them Faust's still sleeping spirit and leaving to the Prince of Evil merely that which belongs to him—the decaying body.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE HEAVEN-WORLDS

THE poet gives us only such a faint, dim outline of the passage of that sleeping soul through the intermediate spheres, and its awakening on the thither-side.

His verses are deep with veiled suggestions, and we can see through such veils but so darkly. He himself, of course, may not have seen all, must have forgotten much on his return to pen and paper, and much may not have been "lawful to utter."

There is a vision of a wonderful scene on what seems to be a fairer counterpart of the earth—wide deserts, clad in a mantle of iridescent light; green forests, be-ribboned with rushing white streams; majestic rocks crowned with cloud and snow.

Of the inhabitants of this plane and the regions above it, just visible, it is difficult to speak. Upon the earth are the Just, not yet perfect. Among these, and above these, are younger and elder angels; there are evidently degrees in development in heaven as well as upon earth. Further than this a great crowd of beings unnamed, perchance but half seen in the poet's vision. . . .

Three great forms, inhabiting different regions, and each bearing the name of father, Goethe makes some attempt to describe. There is Pater Estaticus, the ruler of the world of emotion (or at least, it seems, of the fairer part of it), who has in his guardianship all those who would reach to God through such a

channel. "The end of desire is love"—this is his theme.

There is Pater Profundus, the great spirit who has sway over the realm of mind. Those who come to him must have freed themselves from the bonds of sense, and have overpassed the boundaries of the emotional sphere.

Faust has worked for many years under the tutelage of this great spirit, and when he at the last received the highest gift, the inner sight, from his hands, must have heard the burden of his song in heaven: "True wisdom leads to love."

We are told of a third father of a kingdom—Pater Seraphicus, the ruler of the sphere of renunciation [? Nirvana] (a plane above the one to which Faust is tending surely, though the poet seems to think that the sphere of Mary crowns all), but even his song is of the greatness and gladness of love.

. . . When Faust comes into the vision, it is with shut eyes and sealed senses. Angels bear the sleeping soul upwards, and their chant is the keynote of the story: "Let but a soul unweariedly aspire, to such we ever bring redemption." Aspiration, it is a quality that, enduring, conquers all the worlds; and our faults and follies will find purification and pardon and disappear.

Such purification is now needed. Faust has still some of the stains and imperfections of the earth clinging to him . . . there is a period of purgation—we are not told if it occupies moments or years; if it is passed through in this sleep, or endured consciously. Only finally the man emerges—under a new name—free, awake, enraptured, and stands on the threshold of his goal, the heaven of love [Buddhic plane], the kingdom of the Eternal Mother.

But he is bewildered and dazed by the wealth of light . . . there is a period of waiting; and at last it is Marguerite, pardoned and transfigured, who, rising above him, becomes his tender guide upon the way. . . .

This is our last glimpse of the freed man and his beloved. Together Faust and Marguerite pass inwards to the glowing centre of that world, and, hidden in light, pass from our ken.

. . . . .

Many are the paths that lead upwards ; but men most often come by wisdom and work, women by love and suffering. And thus, in the poet's vision, it was a woman-soul that ruled that sphere of love eternal, and again a woman who guided Faust until and when he reached it.

We leave the lovers once more together, at the beginning of their progress into the depths of the invisible, and yet at the same time at the end of their pilgrimage, for the beginning and the end is love.

Then the heavens close for us, though we know that they are still growing more and more perfect for those two souls who pass on from glory to glory ; and, as the walls of our prison-house gather round us once more, we are given one thing to remember, the refrain of a song that echoes from the spheres where we have left them.

"All of mere transient date,  
As symbol showeth,  
Here the inadequate,  
To fulness groweth."(A. S.)

"The indescribable  
Here, it is done.  
The woman-soul leadeth us  
Upwards and on."(B. T.)

THE END

## APPENDIX

"IN former days plays were read by the public as well as acted before them. This is no longer the case. . . . The reading of a play is an acquired, and not an easy art. . . . The man who reads a play, like the man who reads a musical score, must use his imagination. The musician clothes, as he reads, the dry bones of the symbols on the page with harmony and melody. The play-reader, too, has little more than the skeleton of the play before him; he has to gather from the short, technical stage directions, and to read between the lines of the dialogue, the scene, the colour, the tones of the speaking voice, the gestures and the movements of the actors.

"In the novel all this is done for the reader, and so it may be said that the novelist has helped to spoil the play-reader. . . . It would be difficult to popularise play-reading again in this country. Readers would have, as it were, to learn a new language. . . . The written play, to say the least of it, is difficult reading."

The above quotation is from an article in the *Twentieth Century* for December 1892, by Oswald Crawford, and so exactly explains and justifies my attempt, that it may stand instead of the lengthy appendix I meant to have written. I will add but a few words.

Justification is indeed required for the rough and familiar handling of a masterpiece. My excuse must be, I have believed myself able to bring Goethe's *Faust* into touch with people who could not have gone unaided to the book. The number of people familiar with both parts of the poem is, I believe, very small.

As to the working out of the venture, Mr Crawford says that in reading a play we must use our imagination. I have used mine freely, following my own fancies and filling up gaps, but building these structures upon the solid foundations of the lines of the poem, or on the opinions of well-known commentators. In Part I., and Acts ii., iii., iv. of Part II., I am not aware of having advanced any opinion unsupported by well-known critics; but in the closing scenes I have worked more along my own lines, though not in antagonism (as far as I am aware) to any well-known authorities.

I have used and have quoted from two translations, Miss Swanick's and Bayard Taylor's, and must crave their pardon if I have forgotten

to add their initials when I have quoted. The book has been taken up and laid aside so many times because of broken health that it has suffered in many respects, and the revision leaves much to be desired.

Footnotes and lengthy references would have been out of place in a book designedly framed to be light reading, so this summary will be enough for the general reader who shall have followed me so far; and the aim of the preceding pages will have been accomplished if he turns from the last words of this superficial sketch to the deep verses of the great German mystic.

1903.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER XXIV

ON re-reading *Faust* some years after it was written, many faults come to view which were un-noticed at the time. In my own defence I must remember that the book was written under great difficulties. Those were years (like the present ones) of constant ill-health, and more than once I had to lay aside all work for months. This explains much, though it may not excuse.

One omission, however, must be rectified. The "core of wisdom," Chapter XXIV., seemed to me at the time of writing to be no greater than many another truism, no more important than many another piece of knowledge. More thought on the subject and more experience of life have proved it otherwise. The "core of wisdom" contains two most central laws.

*Law 1. Fitness shall precede progression. Man shall WORK out his own salvation.*

"Freedom and life are only merited  
By those who earn these, day by day."

says Goethe. After a decade or so of charity to those who have not earned the right to ask for help, this truth is coming home to us nationally as well as personally. Carnegie is said to have put the idea in a quaint and homely fashion. "Don't boost a man up a ladder who is not trying to climb, or when you stop boosting he will fall, to his own injury."

And the second task that nature lays on us after work, is the development of a brave heart. Courage and gallantry.

*Law 2. Safety brings degeneration. Man shall FIGHT his own battles.*

The results of shirking or cowardice are written plainly all over the records of history and natural history.

"Any new set of conditions occurring to an animal which render its food and safety very easily attained, seem as a rule to lead to

degeneration. . . . Let the parasitic life once be secured, and away go legs, jaws, eyes, and ears; the active, highly-gifted crab insect or annelid may become a mere sac, absorbing nourishment and laying eggs" (S. Ray Lankester, quoted in *Natural Law*, etc., by Drummond). Because of this Goethe's colony was ringed round with danger.

So the "core of wisdom" has more in it than seemed at first sight, and it is a double truth that deepens in proportion as we meditate on it.

Faust indeed obeyed the dictum laid down centuries later by Emerson. "Shape your colony in accordance with moral law," said the great American in his *Essay on Civilisation*, "and all the powers of earth and heaven will then work with you." "Hitch your wagon to a star, and the constellations, *because they are going the same way*, will do all the pulling and hauling."

One more quotation. "Apart from the pulling and hauling, stands what I am! Idle, amused, complacent, unitary!" says another American, Walt Whitman.

We can imagine Faust away in the depths of the heavens—idle, because he sees that others must work as he did; complacent, for he knows that the end will be perfection; unitary, for he has attained perfection; yet watching with divine love and interest the struggles of the people that he founded: and perhaps—who knows?—in a very deep sense coming (as he wished) to stand once more among them for a while before his soul slips into the shining sea. *Om mani pádme hum.*

REIGATE, 1907.